

DRAMATIC PIECES

CALCULATED TO

EXEMPLIFY THE MODE OF CONDUCT WHICH
WILL RENDER

YOUNG LADIES

BOTH AMIABLE AND HAPPY, WHEN THEIR
SCHOOL EDUCATION IS COMPLETED.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Volume II.

CONTAINING THE

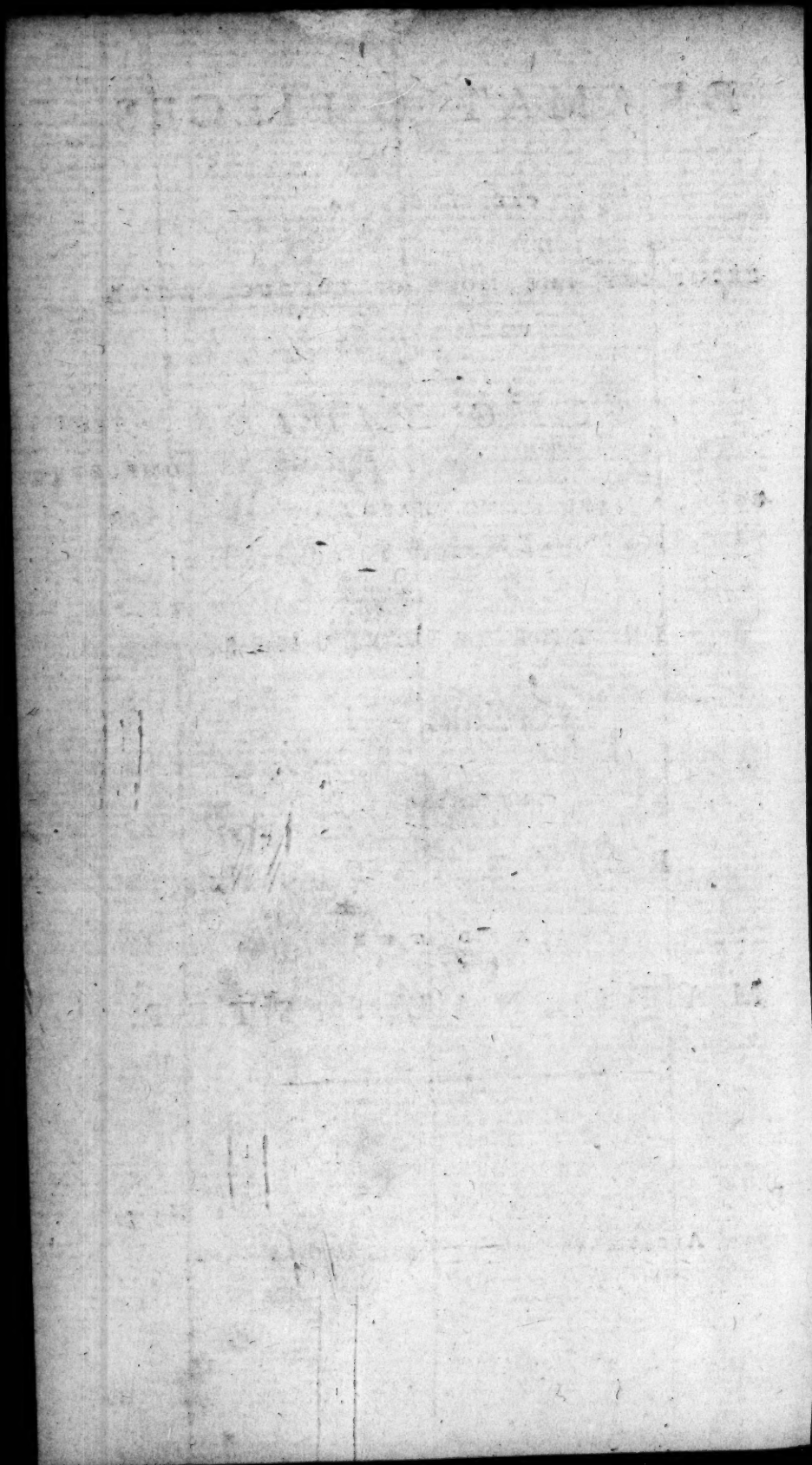
REFORMATION,

AND THE

MATERNAL SISTER.

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by JOHN MARSHALL and Co. at No. 4,
ALDERMARY CHURCH YARD, in BOW-LANE.



P R E F A C E.

IN pursuance of the plan laid down in the former part of this little work, I now present my Readers with two additional *Dramatic Pieces*; in which I have endeavoured to shew, that a *life of dissipation* is dreadful in its consequences, as it puts a stop to *mental improvement*, destroys *domestic harmony*, is highly *injurious to society*, and endangers the loss of *eternal happiness*.

It is impossible, in the compass of so short a work as the present, to place this important matter in its *strongest light*; neither can advice given in this, or any other mode, be expected to have due weight, unless enforced by parental *authority* and *example*; a proper exertion of the one, and circumspection in regard to the other, would spare many mothers the sorrow of seeing their blooming offspring sink into untimely graves; and the bitter remorse that must succeed (if any sense of *religion* remains in the mind) for neglecting to prepare them for so awful a change.

Full

P R E F A C E.

v

Full of health and gaiety, young persons are apt to imagine their strength equal to every exertion which their love of insatiable pleasure may require. They expose themselves alternately to the excesses of *heat* and *cold*; they *defy fatigue*; they *abridge* themselves of their *rest*, or they take *repose* in those hours, when the *air*, cleared from *noxiuous vapours* by the *merning sun*, is full of *invigorating freshness*; which would give strength to their bodies, and improve the natural cheerfulness of their minds; not considering, that till their *growth is completed*, the utmost care is requisite to *establisth a good constitution*.

tution. For such imprudent irregularities, the *inexperience* and *impetuosity* of *youth* may be admitted as an apology; but what can excuse the *mother* who, frequently for *her own gratification*, leads on her *daughter* in so dangerous a career? Many instances does the present day afford of persons, who, like Mrs. *Loveless*, encourage, nay *cherish* those very faults, which it is their duty to *eradicate*.

Sorry I am to say, that such *reforms* as are exhibited in these *Dramatic Pieces*, are not so much *pictures* of what really happens in the world, as *ideal representations* of such as ought to take place; yet, I flatter myself, they
will

will prove acceptable to mothers of another description, and useful to those for whom they are particularly designed; young ladies, whose *school-education is completed*, and who are arrived at that period of their lives, when the instruction given them, should have for its immediate object the cultivation of the *Domestic Virtues*, with a view to their filling, with propriety, the important offices of WIVES and MOTHERS.

Could the *elder daughters of families* be prevailed on to imitate, as far as opportunity admits, the example of the MATERNAL SISTER, they would certainly find the benefit of it in their
own

own improvement, the increase of their parents affection, the attachment and respectfulness of their younger brothers and sisters, the esteem of the world, and the blessing of Heaven.

P. I.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

T H E

R E F O R M A T I O N .

A D R A M A ,

I N T H R E E A C T S .

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Miss SUTTON.

Miss FANNY SUTTON.

Mr. LOVELESS,

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Miss LOVELESS.

Miss BLOMBERG.

Miss AMELIA BLOMBERG.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Doctor BURGESS.

Nurse, Servants.

THE
REFORMATION.

A DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE, *a Parlour.*

*Miss Loveless and Miss Sutton sitting at a Table
working.*

Miss SUTTON.

HOW fortunate has my life hitherto been, dear Maria! An invariably kind *mother-in-law*, succeeded to the tenderest of *real* ones; and for some time I have been blessed with the constant society of my most esteemed friend, whose amiable virtues endear her to every heart.

B 2

Miss

Miss LOVELESS.

Do not let your partiality over-rate my worth, *Isabella*; when you consider what examples I have had before my eyes from my infancy, it is rather wonderful that I am not a *perfect* character, than that I should endeavour to be an humble copy of their excellencies.

Miss SUTTON.

What astonishes me in your conduct, is, the sweetness with which you bear misfortune and disappointment. I, for my part, have no *merit* in being contented and happy, because every circumstance has conduced to make me so; but you, on the contrary, have known *sorrow* and *mortification* without complaining.

Miss LOVELESS.

If I really possess the fortitude you kindly attribute to me, my dear friend, I am chiefly indebted for it to my honoured mother, who from the dawn of reason, studied to strengthen my mind to bear disappointments; her kind endeavours were seconded by the arguments of my worthy governess; and at length, strongly confirmed by the conduct
and

and precepts of my good aunt, during the two years I lived with her as her adopted daughter. The loss of such dear instructors, called into *practice* the lessons which had been so repeatedly taught me.

Miss SUTTON.

But now that you have *lost* all these dear connections, you are still contented

Miss LOVELESS

And so I ought to be. It is true, I do, and ever shall regret them ; no time will wear out the remembrance of their perfections, or my gratitude for their kindness to me. But ought I to repine for blessings past, who have not only the tenderest of fathers, but, in Mrs. Sutton, one of the kindest of friends ? she has taken me as one of her own family, and never suffers me to feel any other ill effects from the death of my relations, than the loss of their society.

Miss SUTTON.

And yet, *Maria*, you have great *sensibility* ; therefore, the steady calmness of your temper must have been *acquired*, and I should suppose with some difficulty ?

Miss LOVELESS.

It is true, that by observing the good instructions that have been given me, I have been able to subdue a natural quickness in my temper, and I have had many opportunities of remarking the advantages of a meek resigned spirit, in comparison of a fretful discontented mind; the former *lessens* every evil, nay, often turns them into *blessings*; whilst the latter doubles every real misfortune, and casts a gloom over the most cheerful scenes in life.

Miss SUTTON.

You reason very justly, my dear *Maria*. I am convinced by my own experience, that *discontent* is the greatest of all tormentors. I was for a short time a prey to its corrosive bitterness; but thanks to the prudence of my good mother-in-law, I have long been free from its pangs, and hope never more to endure what cannot be recollected even at this distant period without pain; because the remembrance of what I then felt, is inseparably connected with a sense of my own folly, which alone subjected me to such uncomfortable feelings.

Miss

MISS LOVELESS.

Through the unremitting attention of my dear mamma, to point out to my observation every circumstance by which I might improve my temper, two instances in particular made indelible impressions on my mind. The one was, of a lady who had, amongst several other *fine* children, a son that was afflicted with fits from his birth, which had so impaired his faculties, that he was become an idiot. The poor miserable object was suddenly taken off in one of his fits, whilst we were visiting at her house. His mother, instead of being thankful for so great a mercy, threw herself into agonies of sorrow, refused to be comforted, and uttered such shocking expressions, as I cannot recollect without horror.

MISS SUTTON.

She certainly was very blameable ; but I suppose the other instance was a contrast to this ?

MISS LOVELESS.

It was indeed. Poor Mrs. *Golding* ! I think I now have you before my eyes ! This amiable woman was deprived of the best of husbands by a consumption.

tion. Scarcely had she reconciled herself to this severe loss, when her only son, a promising youth of sixteen, was seized with a frenzy fever, which put an end to his life in three days. My mother, who was her nearest friend, prevailed on her to come to our house, in hope of giving her comfort; by which mean, I had an opportunity of seeing the power of patient resignation, in its full force. This excellent woman struggled with her grief; she opened her mind to consolation—never was heard to utter one repining word, but actually *overcame* her sorrow; and rejoiced, that those so dear to her were removed to a happier state! When I was deprived of my dear mother, I called to my mind the different behaviour of these two ladies, and the lessons which had been given me on their examples, and found them very useful, I assure you, *Isabella*.

Miss SUTTON.

Without witnessing such instances as you mention my dear, *my mind*, which was once likely to become the seat of the Furies, has not only been calmed and improved by the instructions of my present dear mamma, but also by attention to opinions
given

given in company, concerning people judged to possess violent uncontrouled passions, and others who submitted to the decrees of Providence like christians.—But here comes my dear mamma.

[Enter Mrs. Sutton.]

Miss LOVELESS.

You have made a long stay at the Pump-room, dear madam; but I assure you, *Isabella* and I have not trifled in your absence. We have been conversing on the advantages of patient resignation to the evils incident to mortality.

Mrs. SUTTON.

It is a fortunate circumstance that your conversation has brought your minds into a proper state, to hear the news I bring you, which will occasion you much concern.

Miss LOVELESS.

You alarm me greatly, madam! I fear to name my father!

Mrs. SUTTON.

He is perfectly well, my dear, I have just parted with him. His late silence has been occasioned by a particular hurry of business, and frequent journeys.

nies. To keep you no longer in suspense, poor Miss *Blomberg* is dying of a consumption, brought on entirely by *habits of dissipation*; nor could your father prevail with her to try the *Bristol* waters, until the *full season* commenced, for she would stay in town to go to court on the birth day; and since she came here, has, until within this week, gone to every ball. At the last she fainted three times. Now she is too bad even to walk from her bed to a sofa, but is carried; yet they carefully conceal her danger from her; suffer her to hear nothing but the most trifling novels; amuse her mind with planning the most becoming dresses for a sick person, and admit all company that she may not be melancholy.

Miss LOVELESS.

Poor unhappy girl! a very few days may terminate her present existence. Surely *folly*, at least, should be kept from her, and *death* be accompanied by *decency*.

Mrs. SUTTON.

I was surprised at meeting Mr. *Loveless* this morning; he rejoiced exceedingly at seeing me. Indeed

it

it is fortunate that our yearly ramble, to shew you different parts of *England*, brought us at *this time* to the Wells, as it will certainly be productive of comfort to him, and may give us an opportunity of being serviceable to Mrs. *Loveless* and *Amelia*; as for the other poor thing, she is beyond relief I fear.

Miss LOVELESS.

Should I not go immediately to my papa's lodgings, madam, and wait upon him and the ladies?

Mrs. SUTTON.

Certainly, my dear. But arm your mind with resolution: the interview with *Juliana* must be a trying one. Can any sight be more affecting, than to behold a young creature, who might long have been an ornament to society, falling a victim to fashion and folly? [*Mrs. Sutton rings the bell.*]

Thomas shall attend you, as he knows their house, for I sent him from the Pump-room with a complimentary message, to which they returned for answer, that they were all well, excepting Miss

Blomberg,

Blomberg, and should be glad to see us when agreeable. But still I think you ought to go first alone; for you must consider yourself as a child of the family.

Miss LOVELESS [*sighs*.]

I wish with all my heart they would regard me in that light.

[*Thomas opens the Door.*]

Mrs. SUTTON.

Attend *Miss Loveless*.

[*Miss Loveless goes out attended by Thomas.*]

Miss SUTTON.

How I pity poor *Maria*! Suppose *Miss Blomberg* should die while she is with her?

Mrs. SUTTON.

Distressing as such an event would be to a feeling mind, I hope the desire of affording comfort to her surviving friends will support her under it. I have no doubt of *Maria's* fortitude, she is not one of those weak *selfish* persons who pay attention to their *own feelings* only; these she can nobly restrain, when the distress of others requires such an exertion.

Miss

Miss SUTTON.

Rich in every virtue yourself, my dear mamma, you attribute the same goodness to others ; and indeed, in this instance I perfectly agree with you ; for I believe, *Maria* wants only your experience to make her your very counterpart.

Mrs. SUTTON.

On every occasion her conduct does honor to her instructors. But where is *Fanny* ?

Miss SUTTON.

She is writing to *Caroline*, and giving her an account of our journey.

Mrs. SUTTON.

That is kind. I have written to your papa and our dear boys. The worthy Mrs. *Cartwright* will be their mother during our absence ; her living with us gives you these excursions, I could not otherwise leave my younger children.

Miss SUTTON.

You are all goodness, madam, and have made us a truly happy family.

Mrs. SUTTON.

And you have all contributed to my felicity, by so kindly accepting my endeavours to promote yours. But, come my love, by this time the coach waits to carry us to *Clifden*. Let us seek your sister.

[*They go out.*]

SCENE *changes to Mr. Loveless's Lodgings.*

[*Miss Blomberg lying on a Sofa, Mrs. Benfield waiting on her.*]

Miss BLOMBERG, [*in a hollow faint voice.*]

How hard this confinement is upon me! How provoking, that at eighteen, I must be obliged to give up pleasures which court me with inviting smiles, because I have a tiresome cough, and cannot walk across the room!

Mrs. BENFIELD.

I am sorry, madam, to hear you regret the loss of such pleasures as a *misfortune*; you may live, I hope, to enjoy greater than those.

Miss

Miss BLOMBERG.

O, it is impossible I should ever add to the round of amusement I was in before my illness. You know, *Benfield*, there were not hours for every engagement. And now to come to *Bristol* for the first time, and be forced by illness, to give up going to the Rooms! It is the greatest misfortune that ever befel any one.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

It is without doubt a great *mortification* to you, madam, and your *illness* is to be sure a *misfortune*; but how many people would smile to hear you call *the loss of going to the Rooms*, by such a name?

Miss BLOMBERG.

How can you talk so absurdly? Have I not *youth*, *beauty*, *riches*, and a mamma who wishes me to partake every amusement; and am I not prevented by a weakness which hinders my even standing on my feet? Can any thing be more provoking? [*Bursts into tears of peevishness.*] But you have no *feeling*?

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Indeed, my dear lady, I have the greatest compassion for you; but must confess, it is excited

by your *declining health*, not by your *loss of amusement*.

Miss BLOMBERG.

Every body is *unfeeling* to me. My mamma and sister have no time to spare for me; and if they had, my spirits are now so low, and I am so weak, I should make them melancholy. All my acquaintance too forsake me, because I can no longer contribute to their *amusement*, and I have not a friend in the world !

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Yes, you have, and now at *Bristol*. Your papa has just informed me, that Miss *Lovelace* is unexpectedly come to this place with Mrs. *Sutton*, and her two eldest daughters. They travel, it seems, every summer for pleasure and improvement.

Miss BLOMBERG.

How can you call *her* my *Friend*? A girl none of us have ever been fond of—one whom I hate—and yet I know not why.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

O, madam ! I also once disliked her, but must confess, my dislike arose from envy of her superior goodness and accomplishments.

Miss

Miss BLOMBERG.

Surely you dream, *Benfield*. Miss *Loveless* has never visited us since you lived with me. How then can you know her?

[Enter a Maid.]

MAID.

Miss *Loveless* is in the breakfast parlour, madam, and begs to be admitted to you.

Miss BLOMBERG [in great agitation.]

I will not see her.—I cannot see her.—I hate her company more than that of any one.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Pray compose yourself, Miss *Blomberg*. I will, if you please, attend Miss *Loveless*, and beg her to postpone her visit to you.

Miss BLOMBERG.

Postpone it! She shall never come. I know she only wants to triumph over me, because her odious country life has preserved her in health, while the pleasures of the world have deprived me of mine. [She bursts into tears and faints away.]

Mrs. BENFIELD, [*supporting her.*]

Poor lady! *Mary* run for the Nurse, we must lay her down.

[*Exit Maid.*]

[*Enter Nurse.*]

NURSE.

Is Miss *Blomberg* dead?

[*Mrs. Benfield assists in laying Miss Blomberg down, then speaks.*]

Mrs. BENFIELD—

I hope she revives. I must leave her to your care, Nurse, as I am wanted below.

[*Exit Mrs. Benfield.*]

Miss BLOMBERG [*recovering.*]

Where am I? O, Nurse, I am very bad. Do you think I shall die?

NURSE.

Lack-a-day! No, my lady. You are worth twenty dead ones, If you will but take your good stuff, we shall soon see you again all glittering in gold and jewels, sweeping your long train behind you, going to the Ball-room, where all the fine gentlemen will crowd about to dance with you.

Mrs.

Miss BLOMBERG.

Did you ever see any one as ill as me, recover?

NURSE.

Have I? Aye, twenty, and twenty at the end of that. Never think of Death. You cannot die until your time is come

Miss BLOMBERG.

Do not mention the word *Death* any more, Nurse; I cannot bear to hear it. I shall faint again if you say that dreadful word.

NURSE.

Well, well, I will not, I will not. Never fear the old skeleton. Lie still, my good lady, and try if you can sleep.

[*The Scene drops.*]

[SCENE changes to a Parlour, where Miss Loveless sits by herself reading a News-paper, which, upon hearing footsteps, she throws down, then speaks.]

Miss LOVELESS.

What can all this hurrying mean? Poor *Juliana*! much I fear her end approaches. By my father's account of her, there can be no hope; and yet I
met

met her mother and sister as gay as ever. Is it that they *deceive* themselves? Or is the *fashion* to have no *feeling*? But my father told me her situation in their hearing.—Ah! poor, infatuated mother and sister, too soon, for your *own peace*, will you be convinced of her danger.

[Enter Mrs. Benfield, [weeping.]]

Mrs. BENFIELD.

I am sorry, madam—

Miss LOVELESS, [surprised.]

Miss Rawlins! I did not expect the pleasure of meeting you here. Are these the lodgings belonging to Mr. Loveless?

Mrs. BENFIELD.

They are, Miss Loveless. And grieved am I to tell you, that Miss Blomberg is too ill to see you.

Miss LOVELESS.

I dread to ask your opinion of her situation?

Mrs. BENFIELD.

I fear she cannot survive many days, and will die, as she has lived, thoughtless of futurity.

Miss LOVELESS.

Surely, somebody should gently lead her mind to think of her situation, and, without alarming, soothe her to reflection. But, my dear school-fellow, how kind you are in thus leaving the amusements of this gay place to attend a dying friend. I did not know you were acquainted in the family.

Mrs. BENFIELD, [confused.]

I have no claim, believe me, dear *Miss Loveless*, to your good opinion.—Is it possible my improprieties should not have reached your ears?

Miss LOVELESS.

Perhaps the situation I have been in since we parted, which prevented my making enquiries after you, might also occasion your never being mentioned to me. I was sent for by my aunt soon after you left school, who, in a very short time, fell into a decline; two years put a period to her life. During her illness, I had but little intercourse with the world, for I confined myself almost constantly to her apartment. Since her death. I have lived with *Mrs. Sutton*, my aunt's intimate friend. As long as my worthy governess lived, I kept up a correspondence with her, and was going to pay her a visit

a visit, where probably I should have heard of my old play-fellow, but Mrs. Groves's sudden death, deprived me of the pleasure I promised myself, in the society of so inestimable a friend.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

It would be cruel to take up your time in relating a story which will give you pain, although my unhappiness is entirely the consequence of my own perverseness. I will not therefore, madam, trouble you with the particulars which have reduced me to the humiliating condition of *waiting maid* to two *fine ladies*.

Miss LOVELESS.

And are you really in that unhappy state? I am impatient to hear your story;—perhaps it may be in my power to mitigate some of your woes, at least my inclination is good. Proceed therefore, I am all attention.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

How can I sufficiently thank you, my dear Miss *Loveless*, for your kind indulgence to an unhappy creature! I cannot give you now the whole history of my shameful misconduct, for I expect every minute
to

to be called to Miss *Blomberg*, I must therefore, hasten to tell you, that after treating my dear father and his amiable wife, with the utmost ingratitude and disrespect, in return for their unparalleled kindness and indulgence, I formed a connection with a worthless man, of low degree, and consented to a *clandestine marriage*.—An unhappy step which I have had cause to repent from the first moment I was rash enough to take it! I exchanged my dear father's house for a mean miserable lodging. And soon as the wretch, I had married, found he was deceived in the information which had been given him, that I could claim my mother's jointure on the day of my marriage, he began to treat me in the cruelest manner; in consequence of such inhumanity, I was soon seized with a violent illness, in which he abandoned me, and I have never since heard of him. I happily recovered through the tender care of my landlady; and finding an absolute necessity for doing something for a livelihood, (for I had not courage to return to my father) I requested this good woman to make enquiries for me; and by her recommendation, I now wait upon the Miss *Blombergs*. So far from repining

at

at the mortifications I endure, I regard them as the just punishment of my disobedience.

Miss LOVELESS.

I am greatly affected with your narrative. It confirms me in the opinion I have heard my dear mother often express, "that *clandestine marriages* are generally unhappy ones." Do not think, that by saying this, I mean to cast reflections on you, my friend; it would be cruel to do so, as you are sensible of your errors, and are so great a sufferer by them. I would not add to your afflictions, but if I could lessen them, it would give me much satisfaction. Perhaps, with the assistance of my good Mrs. Sutton, I may be a mean of conciliating matters between you and your parents, if you will allow me to act as a mediatrix.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

O, my dear Miss *Loveless*! I am unworthy of the kind regard you express for me. Throw not away your charity on so undeserving an object. Distress not my dear parents with any solicitations in my favor. I have offended them beyond forgiveness; and am in a much happier situation than after

my

my inexcusable folly I could ever have expected to be.

Miss LOVELESS.

Well, we will resume this subject at another opportunity ; in the mean time, assure yourself of my best offices.—We were talking of Miss *Blomberg's* insensibility of her danger. Is it possible that she can stand *thoughtless of death* on the verge of *eternity* ? What a melancholy picture ! What a sacrifice to pleasure ! To *pleasure* ? It is a *prophanation* of the word to call it so.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Indeed you say true, madam ; the lives which the ladies in this family lead, are too fatiguing for the strongest constitutions to sustain.—Yet they go on in their career, lest they should miss any place of fashionable resort, that the world should suppose they are not at the top of the *ton* ; and I verily believe, that frequently, when a good deal indisposed, they stifle their complaints, and affect to be in perfect health, rather than give up a party, which it is impossible for them to enjoy.

Miss LOVELESS.

It is *my* good fortune to be so far ignorant of the manners of the *fashionable world*, as to be unable to give my judgment on this subject from my *own observation*; and I have more cause than ever to rejoice, that the accidents of my life, have, until very lately, kept me in *retirement*.—But let me not detain you any longer from Miss *Blomberg*. Should she, or any of the family, express a desire to see me, do me the favor of sending for me, and I will attend them immediately. Our lodgings are but a few doors off. This card will direct you to them. Farewel! May our prospects brighten!

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Could my wishes avail, no cloud should obscure the bright sunshine of your days. O, my dear, my amiable friend, how *little* do I appear in my own estimation, when conscience draws a comparison between *your excellencies* and *my indiscretion*.

Miss LOVELESS.

I blush to receive such praises. Remember me to Miss *Blomberg*. Adieu.

[*She goes out.*

Mrs.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

What an amiable creature! Lost and undone as I am, it is a blessing that I can still *admire* what is right and regret that I have swerved from it. But I must attend my *mistress*. What a word from me who was born to *command*!—And had I known how to respect myself, I should never have been reduced to a state of *servitude*.

[*She goes out.*]

END of ACT I.

A C T II.

Miss Loveless and the two Miss Suttons sitting together.

[Enter Mrs. Sutton with a Letter in her hand.]

Mrs. SUTTON.

THERE, my dear *Maria*, read what I have written to *Mrs. Rawlins*; her goodness will make her our best advocate in behalf of the poor penitent; and I hope she will be able to prevail on her father to grant her forgiveness.

Miss LOVELESS, [reads,—then speaks.]

I think, madam, you have said every thing that a feeling mind could dictate; and sincerely do I join my wishes to yours, that this letter may be successful.

Miss

Miss SUTTON.

I am astonished, to think it should be in *human nature*, for a young person well brought up, to act as Miss *Rawlins* has done.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Nor is it in *human nature*, my dear, to commit such enormities, where the *better part* of that nature, *Reason*, is suffered to prevail. Miss *Rawlins's* behaviour is a melancholy instance, among a thousand others that might be produced, of the ill effects of indulging headstrong passions. In vain does parental authority exert its influence over a mind resolved to resist it; the ear of the self-willed is deaf to the kindest admonitions. All that a parent can do, is to recommend the best path; but if the child will think her knowledge superior to that of her instructors, and refuse to obey the advice of experience, she must fall, and become miserable, like poor Miss *Rawlins*.

Miss FANNY SUTTON.

What a rock have we escaped, my dear mamma, lest, as we were, for a time, to our own guidance, or rather to the fatal influence of servants. How

thankful ought we to be, that our minds were not so entirely depraved, as to make us insensible of your kindness, and to prevent our seeing the advantages of obeying you; otherwise, we might have involved ourselves in similar distresses with this unfortunate young lady.

Mrs. SUTTON.

It is very true, my dear. But though I can by no mean acquit Miss *Rawlins*, yet I must say, that she has an excuse which you could not have pleaded. Her mamma was the very reverse of yours, and lived just long enough to strengthen the weeds springing in her child's mind, which was the proper business of maternal care to eradicate. The unfortunate prejudice, which in common with many other young people, Miss *Rawlins* took up against a mother-in-law, prevented her listening to the admonitions of hers, which increased her stubbornness to such a pitch, that nothing but the miseries she has endured, could have overcome them.

Miss LOVELESS.

How different has been my lot! Had I been
blessed

bleſſed with ſuch a friend in my father's wife, my happineſs would have been complete.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Perfect happineſs, my dear girl, is not the lot of mortals ; the greateſt ſhare of it we can obtain, is from a *ſelf-approving conſcience*. Endeavour to do your duty in every relation of life, and this bleſſing will be yours, from whence will ſpring, as its natural fruits, peace of mind, and cheerfulneſs of temper. Theſe, I am much deceived, if you do not all three already enjoy.

Miss SUTTON.

I hope we do in general, mamma. But the dreadful ſtate of Miſs *Blomberg*, and the miſfortunes of Miſs *Ratwils*, have caſt a gloom over our minds, which we find it difficult to remove.

Mrs. SUTTON.

By admitting the tender feelings of humanity for the diſtreſſes of *others*, you act agreeably to the principles of benevolence and chriſtianity. But let me warn you againſt *indulging* them to *exceſs*. Take a tender part in the affliction of your fellow creatures of every degree,—relieve their wants,—give them

them consolation to the utmost of your power ;—but, at the same time, support your own spirits, or your life will be a burden to you, and your company, disagreeable to your friends ; nay, you will incapacitate yourselves for the kind offices you engage in.

[*A knock at the door, a Servant enters, and announces Mrs. Loveless and Miss Amelia Blomberg. The ceremony of meeting and sitting down ended, Mrs. Loveless speaks.*]

Mrs. LOVELESS.

You cannot imagine what *distress* we are in! Only think of the stage omitting to bring our new dresses for to-night's ball! and we would rather stay away than appear in those we have been seen in before.

Miss AMELIA,

It is horridly provoking. I wish we had sent one of our own carriages for them. I suppose, madam, [*addressing herself to Mrs. Sutton,*] that you and these young ladies will be there, and that adds to the disappointment.

Mrs.

Mrs. SUTTON.

I intended, when I came to *Bristol*, to give my dear girls a taste of all the entertainments the place affords ; and we had determined to go to the ball this evening ; but Miss *Loveless* was so exceedingly affected with hearing of Miss *Blomberg*'s situation, that I am sure she will decline going, and I know my daughters would on no account leave her by herself.

Mrs. LOVELESS, [*confused.*]

I see no reason that Miss *Loveless* should deny herself those pleasures her age entitles her to. Besides, Miss *Blomberg* will soon be better ; she is only *weak*, and I make no doubt but that she will in a short time be restored to perfect health.

Miss LOVELESS.

Surely, madam, some *illness* must have brought on that *excessive weakness* ; and until the *cause* is removed, how can she possibly *recover her strength* ?

Miss AMELIA.

La, *Maria* ! You are so fanciful ? *Juliana* has only *over racked herself*. Perhaps you will say,
that

that *I am ill*, when I tell you, that I *fainted away twice* this morning.

Miss FANNY SUTTON.

Indeed! I wonder how you have strength or courage even to walk about after it, much less to talk of going to a ball.

Miss LOVELESS.

Whether you chuse to call me *fanciful* or not, my dear Miss *Amelia*, I am exceedingly *concerned*, nay *alarmed*, at hearing you say so; especially, when you really appear to me *considerably thinner* than when I saw you last; but yet, the *bloom in your cheeks* gives me hopes that my fears are groundless.

Miss AMELIA.

And do you think I would go about in public with *pale cheeks*, when fashion authorises me to supply the want of *natural roses* with *artificial ones*? I am not ashamed to say that I *use rouge*; and you must have very unfashionable eyes, not to have discerned it at the first glance, for I took no pains in laying it on, to imitate *vulgar nature*, I assure you. I adore the lady who first ventured to appear in *public* with *painted cheeks*, in defiance
of

of the prejudice which so long prevailed in the *English* nation against it; and should even wish, like *Narcissa* mentioned by *Mr. Pope* in his *Essays*, to be painted in my coffin.

Mrs. SUTTON.

You must excuse their ignorance, Miss *Amelia*, for you know the Miss *Suttons* and Miss *Loveless* also have been introduced into the world by an old-fashioned woman, in whose mind the prejudice you ridicule is so strongly rooted, that no arguments can possibly eradicate it; and you must excuse my saying, that it shall be my earnest endeavour to prevent every young person, over whom I have any influence, from adopting a custom, which sober sense and reason must condemn.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Then you must not take the young ladies into public, for there is absolutely no such thing as being seen without rouge.

Miss AMELIA.

What would you say, Mrs. Sutton, if you were to see *Juliana* then? She is frequently obliged to lie down. which rubs the rouge off, and as soon as she rises,

rises, is impatient to have it repaired. Poor thing! I wish she was well enough to do it herself, for our maid is positively the aukwardest creature at it in the world. She declares she never *saw* such a thing before. I wonder what brutes she has lived with!

Miss LOVELESS.

Her youth is some excuse for her ignorance. She appears to be very young.

Miss AMELIA.

A demure little pufs! She has not half *life* and *spirit* enough for *me*. Instead of *diverting* my sister, she has always tears in her eyes. I declare, were she my maid only I would soon send her away.

Miss LOVELESS.

Perhaps some private sorrow of *her own* may oppress her heart. She looks *genteel* and *well-bred*. But if her sensibility arises from her concern for Miss *Blomberg*, I honor and esteem her for it.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

If I find out that she is *unhappy*, I shall desire *Juliana* to let me provide another servant for her. I would have nothing melancholy come near her.

Mrs.

Mrs. SUTTON.

It is certainly proper to endeavour to keep up the spirits of sick people; but *mirth*, is in my opinion, full as impertinent as *sorrow* in the countenance and behaviour of their attendants. Have you advice for Miss *Blomberg*, madam?

Mrs. LOVELESS.

O yes, Dr. *Burges* attends her every day. He seems to think her exceedingly ill, but it is the way with those sort of people, to pretend their patients are very bad, that their own skill in curing them may appear the greater.—Will not you come and see her, ladies, during her confinement?

Miss SUTTON.

Most willingly, madam. But as Miss *Loveless* was not admitted, *we* could not hope to be received, so intended to defer paying our compliments, until *she* had been sent for.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Well then, if you are determined not to grace the ball this evening, will you drink your tea with her? *Amelia* and I are engaged in a large party; you must excuse *us*.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Certainly, madam.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

We must now wish you a good morning. Come,
Amelia.

[*They go out.*

Miss LOVELESS, [bursts into tears.]

It is too much; I cannot see them running thus
blindly to *misery*, without the deepest concern, yet
dare not speak my thoughts.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Comfort yourself, my dear, and be thankful that
you had friends to snatch you from so perilous a
state.

Miss LOVELESS.

I meant, what I said about *Miss Rawlins*, as a
prelude to her story; but finding Mrs. *Lovely* and
Amelia so inhuman to her feelings, as a *servant*, I
know not how to proceed.

Mrs. SUTTON.

We will concert our measures as soon as we have
sufficient grounds to go upon. [*A loud knock at the
door.*

[*Enter*

[*Enter Mr. Loveless, greatly agitated.*]

MR. LOVELESS.

Fly, I beseech you, my dear Mrs. Sutton, to my wretched wife and her daughter! *Juliana* is now, I fear, actually dying.

MISS LOVELESS.

Let us go this instant, my dear madam.

MRS. SUTTON.

We will attend you, sir.

[*Mr. Loveless goes out with Mrs. Sutton and Miss Loveless.*]

MISS SUTTON.

I wonder how Mrs. *Loveless* will bear this dreadful event, for which her mind was so unprepared.

MISS FANNY SUTTON.

I should think it would break her heart. What a trying scene will mamma and poor *Maria* have!

MISS SUTTON.

I do not know two people better qualified for such scenes than they are. Capable of deriving instruction themselves from the faults of others, and of mitigating sorrow with tender sympathy, accompanied with a constant presence of mind; for want

of which, many people increase the distresses they attempt to soothe.

Miss FANNY.

I have not yet attained this happy presence of mind. I am *all agitation*, and could not have *courage* to go to Mr. Loveless now on any account.

Miss SUTTON.

I could wish to avoid it ; but if occasion required, would summon up all my fortitude ; for it certainly is very wrong to *run away* from our friends in *affliction*. Suppose, my dear, as you are so affected, we take a turn in the garden ?

Miss FANNY.

With all my heart. For I really feel myself quite uncomfortable. Perhaps the air will be of service to me.

[*They go out.*]

SCENE

SCENE *changes to Mr. Loveless's House.*

Mrs. Loveless weeping, Miss Amelia Blomberg sitting by her

[*Enter Miss Loveless, endeavouring to suppress her tears ; but on her attempting to speak, is unable to restrain them.*]

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Why do you weep ? Why lament ? You are innocent. You have not killed a child !

Miss AMELIA.

Pray, mamma, do not talk so, my sister may yet recover.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

O, name not such an impossibility ! These eyes beheld her in the last agonies.—These ears heard her dying groans. The look she cast on me, seemed to accuse me as the author of all her misery. What cause has she now to wish that she had been born to poverty, that she might have been blessed with health ?

Miss AMELIA.

I wish you had not gone into the room.

Miss LOVELESS.

Surely, my dear, it was natural and proper for a mother to attend her dying child.

Miss AMELIA.

I know it was ; but cannot bear to see my mother so affected. It will be misfortune enough to lose my sister so unexpectedly.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Not *unexpectedly* to any, but to those as wilfully blind as I was. Had I but believed, what even my common acquaintance told me, I might have been prepared for this dreadful stroke. Had I listened to the admonitions of my husband, who saw the danger I exposed my dear child to, by suffering her to trust a constitution, naturally delicate, to *night air*, and *excessive fatigue*, she might now long live in health and peace, instead of—O Heaven ! do I not hear her groans?

[*She gets up and walks about the room in violent agitation, wringing her hands. Miss Loveless follows, and leads her to her seat.*]

Miss

Miss LOVELESS.

Compose yourself, dear madam, for *our sakes*. Be calm.—Recollect, that if *Juliana* should die, you have still a daughter left. Nay, *daughters*, if you will but accept *me* as such.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Talk not of comfort, it can never reach a wretch like me. Bewildered in a labyrinth of folly! Wandering in darkness, my eyes could only be opened by a stroke like this. Fate has taken its revenge upon me, and made me the most miserable creature existing!

Miss LOVELESS.

Look round in the world, madam, and weigh your sorrows against those which fall to the share of many, and they will appear *light* in the scale; consider also your remaining blessings.

Mrs. LOVELESS, [*after a long pause.*]

I am sensible that I am blessed with many circumstances capable of alleviating sorrow, had I a different mind. But can I reflect on the ill use I have made of riches, without horror? Have I relieved the wants of others? Alas, no. The widow, and the fatherless, have been sent from my door

unrelieved, nay unpitied. My own life has been a constant scene of dissipation. My children too! One already gone.—The other! [*looking at Amelia with anxiety.*] O! *Amelia*, take care of yourself, those faintings are indications of a declining constitution. Let me not *kill you* also!—Can I think of these things, Miss *Loveless*, and receive comfort?

MISS LOVELESS.

Whoever sincerely repents of their indiscretions, my dear madam, may with confidence hope for pardon. It would be presumptuous in me to say, that you have not been guilty of a great offence in the eyes of the Supreme Being. And I would not be so insincere and wicked, as to flatter you into further errors, at a time, when such proper convictions fill your mind, as will, I trust, effect that change, which must end in peace and happiness. Cherish and improve these convictions, and you will have no cause to *despair*.

MRS. LOVELESS.

You too, my dear *Maria*, how cruelly have I used you. Jealous of your worth, I banished you from your father's house, nay, endeavoured to eradicate

dicatè you from his heart ; but in that, I now with thankfulness reflect, I was unsuccessful. Go then from such a monster, I am undeserving of your sweet attention.

Miss LOVELESS.

No, my dear mamma, I will not abandon you in this hour of your distress. It shall be my darling task to soothe your sorrows, by every instance of dutiful attention ; and if I prove so happy as to calm your troubled mind and gain your affections, shall think myself amply repaid for all your neglect.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Come to my arms, my dear, my amiable child,
[*she embraces her.*] *Amelia*, receive your sister.

Miss AMELIA. [*embracing Miss Loveless.*]

And can you forgive *me* too, *Maria* ! I blush to call you *sister*.

Miss LOVELESS.

O happy moment, when I may be allowed to use, and appropriate to myself that desirable appellation ! My *dear sister* ! accept my sincerest assurances,

surances of tender friendship, and unremitting affection.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

In the midst of those sorrows which oppress my heart, this reconciliation gives me inexpressible comfort. Where is your father, my dear? I fear, he must in his heart despise me; yet, with what patience has he submitted to my caprices. I long, yet dread to see him.

Miss LOVELESS.

I fancy he is below with Mrs. Sutton.

Miss AMELIA, [*bursting into tears.*]

O, my dear *Juliana*, would that you could live to partake of our pleasure, which would then be free from the bitter mixture of grief for your loss. Now you are gone, as I fear you must by this time be, I feel my love for you stronger than it was possible for me to do, while engaged in a constant round of amusements, which left no time for the cultivation of social affections.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Amelia, my dear child, do not rend my heart with your lamentations. Consider how your sor-

row

row adds to my afflictions. Follow, henceforth, dear *Maria's* example. Your mother has confessed her faults before you; let her example warn you from a youth of folly. Incur not the painful remorse for mispent time, which now drives me almost to distraction.

Miss AMELIA.

Penetrated with grief, and a variety of feelings, which I never experienced before, I cannot recover myself at once; but if I may but have the advantage of *Maria's* example, will endeavour to imitate her virtues. Take me under your guidance my dear sister, and teach me the happy art of being *amiable* and *beloved*.

Miss LOVELESS.

If you resolve, my dear, to devote some of those hours to the improvement of your mind, which you have been accustomed to spend in mere amusement every desirable end may be attained.

Miss AMELIA.

That I must seriously do, for I see my late folly in the strongest light.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Much as I now wish for this dear girl's company, I feel too great a regard for her to press it. How can I ask her to share our sorrows, since I have refused to make her the companion of our pleasures?

Miss LOVELESS.

You will forgive me, dear madam, if I say, that I regret not the loss of those pleasures. — I have had greater than any the *gay world* can afford in a *calm retirement*, with friends I esteem, and by whom I am, I flatter myself, equally beloved. Yet these pleasures I am ready to relinquish for *your sake*. I will, with the utmost readiness, live with you, as long as assiduous duty can render my company agreeable. If you find me troublesome, I will then seek another abode.

Miss AMELIA.

That you can never be. You will assist me in comforting my dear mamma. Let us now endeavour to make her take some refreshment; dinner must be nearly ready.

Miss

Mrs. LOVELESS.

At least till I know whether my dear child's sufferings are at an end, I cannot eat.

Miss LOVELESS.

If it is only a crust of bread, and a glass of wine.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Indeed I cannot—but I beg that you two will go.

Miss LOVELESS.

Indeed, my dear Madam, we cannot leave you thus: permit us to attend you to your chamber; and let me prevail on you to lie down and endeavour to compose your spirits, and prepare yourself for the worst.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Do with me as you please; convinced that I am unfit to guide myself, I now wish to be led by those who know better, and will take that trouble upon them.—But where is *Mrs. Sutton*?

Miss LOVELESS.

Engaged in some necessary attention, depend on it.—Whilst *Miss Amelia* waits on you, I will, with your permission, seek for *Mrs. Sutton*, and enquire after poor *Juliana*.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Do so, my love; and now, my dear *Amelia*, let us retire, and endeavour to reconcile our minds to the misfortune which has brought us into this state of humiliation. O! what a weak creature am I, that I cannot have resolution to perform the last offices of maternal affection!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE *changes to a Dressing-Room.*

Mrs. Sutton and Dr. Burgess.

Mrs. SUTTON.

And you really think, Doctor, that Miss *Blomberg* may recover?

Dr. BURGESS.

With great care, madam, I think she may. The convulsions, which so alarmed you, were *critical*. Now that the abscess on her lungs is broken, I do not apprehend she will have a return of them. And I should hope she will have no more faintings; but I intreat that she may be kept very still for a few days;

days, and then, perhaps, she may drink the waters with success for a little while? after which, if she mends according to my expectations, I shall consign her to country air, a retired life, and butter milk. I must now take leave, madam, having many patients to visit.

[Exit Doctor.]

Mrs. SUTTON.

What a providential event! I wonder I see none of the family! O! here comes *Maria*.

[Enter Miss Loveless.]

Mrs. SUTTON.

Where have you been, my love, and what is become of Mrs. *Loveless* and *Amelia*?

Miss LOVELESS.

O! my dear madam, I have been engaged in a most affecting scene, and long to tell you the happy effects of my endeavours to comfort them. You will be surprized and rejoiced to hear of the change in their sentiments, and of their perfect reconciliation to me. Mrs. *Loveless* is gone to lie down, and *Amelia* to sit by her.—I suppose, by seeing you here by yourself, that poor *Juliana* has breathed her last.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Indeed she has not.—A happy crisis has taken place; and Dr. *Burgefs*, who is this instant gone, and for whom, indeed, I have been waiting, gives great hopes of her recovery.

Miss LOVELESS.

You astonish and delight me! O! let me fly to impart this welcome news to the unhappy mother and sister.

Mrs. SUTTON.

No, my dear, let *me* do that. Perhaps Mrs. *Loveless* may get a little repose; after which she will be better able to bear this unexpected happiness.—I left *Juliana* in a fine sleep; let us sit down here till some one comes out of her room.

[Enter Mrs. Benfield.]

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Miss *Blomberg* is just awaked, madam, but seems in great agitation of mind: I beg you will come to her. She has just asked for Miss *Loveless*.

Mrs.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Come with me then, *Maria*; you may enter unperceived, as the curtains are drawn, and act as occasion requires.

[*They go out.*

SCENE changes to *Miss Blomberg's Bed-Chamber.*

Miss Blomberg in bed. Miss Loveless enters and sits down on one side concealed by the curtains; Mrs. Sutton goes to the other. Mrs. Benfield and Nurse attending.

Miss BLOMBERG.

O! my dear Mrs. Sutton, what an escape have I had. I thought I was dying, and am sure I was in danger of it. How could my friends tell me that there was none? Perhaps I am only revived for a little while. O! what will become of me in another world?

Mrs. SUTTON.

I have the pleasure to tell you, my dear, that there are well grounded hopes of your recovery. I would not deceive you on any account: nor do I wish to take your thoughts off from a future state. Resolve to improve the mercy granted you, to for-

fake a life of dissipation, and devote some of your time to the practice of piety and morality, and you may be sure that you will be happy both in this world and the next.—But, my dear, you must not talk too much, the Doctor has given positive orders that you should not.

Miss BLOMBERG.

Well, I will not.—But will you *pray for me*? Alas! I know not how to *pray for myself*. O! that I had lived such a life as *Maria* has. Dear *Maria*! whom my conscience reproaches me for having refused to see this morning. If she is in the house I must speak to her; I can have no peace till I do.—Suppose I should die?

Mrs. SURTON.

Maria is in the room; but you positively must not talk to her.—*Maria*, my love, come to your sister.

Miss LOVELESS.

I will only stay to give you this kiss of affection, and to assure my dear *Juliana*, that as soon as her strength will admit of her having her friends about

her, she will find me one of the first to attend her.—
Adieu!

[*She goes out.*]

Miss BLOMBERG.

Kind creature! I hope I shall live to deserve your love.—Are mamma and *Amelia* gone out on some party? O! that they saw *amusements* in the light which the prospect of death has made me regard them!

Mrs. SUTTON.

Indeed, my dear, they are *not*; on the contrary, they are now mingling their tears for the supposed loss of you; for I have had no opportunity of telling them of your amendment, and do not choose to trust the news to a servant. But why will you still exert yourself, and oblige me to talk to you?

Miss BLOMBERG.

Talking will not hurt me half so much as my *own thoughts* would have done, had I not given them vent.—Where is poor *Benfield*? I must speak to her. [*Mrs. Benfield approaches.*] I have used you very unkindly, *Benfield*; but if I live, I will make you amends.—*Benfield*, can you wash the rouge off
my

my cheeks. Poor vain wretch that I was, how could I think of wearing it, at such a time especially? Be sure you throw away every dust of it, and tell *Amelia*, that if ever she should come to be as ill as I have been, she will repent the use of it, as I do. Take all the novels out of the room, and bring me a bible and a prayer-book.—Say you forgive me, *Benfield*.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

If the fear of injuring you did not restrain me, my dear madam, I would give you repeated assurances that I have felt more grief for your sufferings than resentment for any unguarded expression which pain may have caused you to utter. Compose yourself, I entreat you.

NURSE.

Indeed you must lie still, madam. Why, if the doctor was to come in the midst of this *fabulation*, the first thing he would do would be to fling me down stairs. Come, it is time to take your stuff, and then I shall shut all the windows, for you *must* go to sleep.

Mrs.

Mrs. SUTTON.

You are quite in the right, nurse. Miss *Loveless* and I will retire, and I think if Mrs. *Benfield* endeavours to get a little rest too, it will be as well. So adieu! my love.

[They go out, and the Scene shuts.]

END of ACT II.

A C T III.

SCENE, *the Drawing-Room.*

[*Mrs. Sutton, and Mr. and Miss Loveless, sitting waiting for Mrs. Loveless and Miss Amelia, who enter from the Bed-Chamber.*]

Mr. LOVELESS.

HOW are you, my dear, Mrs. Loveless? I sought for you before, but you were just retired, and I was fearful of disturbing you.

Mrs. LOVELESS, [*bursts into tears.*]

O! Mr. Loveless! how contemptible must I have appeared in your eyes! but believe me, you cannot have a meaner opinion of me, than I have of myself! O! pity my weakness, and aid me by those instructions, which I must confess, you were always ready to
give

give me, though. I disdained to receive them: aid me, I say, to be what you would wish me!

Mr. LOVELESS.

Cease, my dear love, thus to distress me with your self reproaches! I come to *comfort* you, not to *accuse* you: here is our good friend Mrs. Sutton too, who always diffuses happiness in every family which she honors with her intimacy: and here is my good Maria, who I am confident will love you and delight to render you any services. By adopting her, as I understand you have done, you have obliterated from my memory every displeasing circumstance.

Mrs. LOVELESS, [*addressing Mrs. Sutton.*]

There is a question which I wish, yet dread to ask: O! my dear Mrs. Sutton! my dear Maria! did not Juliana accuse me with her dying breath? When did she expire?

Mrs. SUTTON.

Compose yourself, my dear madam; I can assure you that Miss Blomberg cast no reproaches upon you. Perhaps we have better news for you than you expect: your child is not dead.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Not dead ! may I trust my ears ? did you say that *Juliana* is not yet dead ?

Mrs. SUTTON.

She really is not, madam.

Miss LOVELESS.

And does she still lie in those dreadful agonies, of which I shall never lose the idea. O ! that she was released ! that the worst was over ! The *worst* ! — that may perhaps *begin* when her bodily sufferings cease. Mr. *Loveless*, I have conducted my child to the edge of a precipice from whence she may plunge into a bottomless abyss. O ! that I had prepared her for a future state ! I cannot support the thoughts of what she may suffer *to all eternity* through my inexcusable folly. O ! that her life could be *spared* ! with what assiduity would I strive to *repair the injury* I have done her !

Mr. LOVELESS.

The opportunity you wish for is likely to be granted you, my dear ; there has, I find, been a happy crisis, and *Juliana* is very likely to recover.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

O! do not give me false hopes, Mr. *Loveless*, they will only aggravate my distress. I saw her actually *aying*.

Mr. SUTTON.

I thought the same when I went to her immediately after you left the room; but during her convulsive struggles, an abscess burst within her. I sent immediately for Dr. *Burgess*, who gives us great hopes indeed.

Miss AMELIA.

O! *Maria*! could I ever have expected this happy turn in her disorder? Shall I see my dear *Juliana* again?

Miss LOVELESS.

I have already had that pleasure; and think she is much better.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

How shall I express my thankfulness for so unexpected a blessing? It shall be the study of my future life to deserve it. I am impatient to see my *Juliana*! My suffering child!

Mrs. SUTTON.

That you must on no account attempt till to-morrow at soonest. Her life depends on the strictest quietness. Now you know of the happy change, I hope, my dear madam, that you and Miss *Amelia* will use your utmost efforts to calm your spirits, that your interview with Miss *Blomberg* may not be productive of violent emotions in either party.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Favor me with your company then, madam, and I will strive to bring myself into that temper of mind you wish me to possess.

Mrs. SUTTON.

I would most readily comply with your obliging invitation, but that I have just received a message from *Isabella*, informing me, that a lady is waiting for me at home upon very particular business; I would not go till I had seen you, being impatient to communicate the happy intelligence, which I should not have deferred so long, but that I knew not what hopes to form till the doctor had been here; and afterwards Miss *Blomberg* herself detained me: immediately on our quitting her, *Maria* and I
feated

seated ourselves in this room as *guards* to prevent the entrance of any domestic who might, by telling you *suddenly*, have occasioned an agitation which would perhaps have been injurious to your health. I must now take my leave.

Mr. LOVELESS.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear madam, for your friendly offices. We shall see you again soon, I hope.

Mrs. SUTTON.

I will endeavour to wait on you when my company leave me. *Maria*, I trust your friend's cause in your hands. [She goes out.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Are we to receive directions from you, *Maria*, respecting the management of *Juliana*?

Miss LOVELESS.

No, my dear madam; Mrs. *Benfield* has ample instructions; and both she and nurse are so careful that you may safely depend on them. It was the cause of another friend which Mrs. *Sutton* recommended to my care. A very distressed friend, who is at this time under your roof.

Mrs. SUTTON.

A friend of yours in distress, my love? Then hasten to offer her all the relief and assistance which it is in our power to give her: but who can she be?

Miss AMELIA.

It strikes my mind, that it must be Mrs. *Benfield*. She has the appearance of a person genteely educated; and sorrow is strongly impressed on her features. I can now recollect with *pity* the looks of *anguish* which I have formerly *contemned*.

Miss LOVELESS.

You are perfectly right in your surmises. Mrs. *Benfield* is the person I mean. She was once my *school fellow*; and little did I expect to meet her here in a state of *servitude*. I cannot enter into every circumstance of her story, it will be sufficient to engage your compassion, if I tell you, that whatever follies she may have been guilty of, she has, I am convinced, most sincerely repented of them. Her distress is occasioned by an *imprudent marriage*.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

It would ill become us to reproach *others* who have so much cause for *self-accusation*: assure Mrs.

Benfield,

Benfield, therefore, of our commiseration, and tell us in what way we can be serviceable to her?

Mr. LOVELESS.

I have often thought her face was no stranger to me, and she seemed to shun my observation. Where can I have seen her?

Miss LOVELESS.

At Mrs. *Groves's*, my dear sir. Do you recollect Miss *Rawlins*?

Mr. LOVELESS.

I think I do; and if her father lives at *Southampton*, I know him well, he was my fellow collegian: I have been at his house since he married the present lady; but his daughter was not then at home; at least I saw her not.

Miss LOVELESS.

Your knowing Mr. *Rawlins* is a very happy circumstance; for you may perhaps be able to lend assistance in the plan Mrs. *Sutton* has formed for bringing about a reconciliation with his daughter.

[Enter a Footman.]

Mrs. Sutton's compliments, sir, and begs the favor of your company at her house immediately.

[Exit Footman.]

Mrs. LOVELESS.

What can be the matter?

Mr. LOVELESS.

Do not alarm yourself, my dear Mrs. Loveless. I will be with you again, as soon as possible.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Do so. I shall be impatient for your return. Will you, Miss Loveless, see where Mrs. Benfield is, and conduct her hither?

Miss LOVELESS.

I will, dear madam.

[She goes out.]

Miss AMELIA.

I shall be quite ashamed to see Mrs. Benfield in the character of a *gentlewoman*, whom I have treated so ill as a *servant*.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

All we can do is to repair our past faults by acts of future kindness.

[Enter

[Enter Miss Loveless and Mrs. Benfield.]

Mrs. LOVELESS. [Taking Mrs. Benfield's hand.]

Be seated, dear madam. We have many apologies to make to you; but we were ignorant who did my daughter the honor of attending her.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Indeed, madam, I cannot seat myself in your presence. Suffer me to consider myself still as a servant to the Miss *Blombergs*.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

On no account; you are the friend of Miss *Loveless*; and that circumstance alone would be sufficient to entitle you to our regard; but it seems Mr. *Loveless* knows Mr. *Rawlins*.

Mrs. BENFIELD, [in an agony.]

O! name not, I beseech you, my dear father, whom I have offended beyond the possibility of forgiveness! Did you know, madam, what a disobedient wretch I have been to the best of parents, you would banish me from your house. You would never suffer me to stand before you. O! that I could hide my wretched head in the grave; but I fear I shall live to break my father's heart!

Miss

Miss LOVELESS.

I beg, my dear Mrs. Benfield, that you will accept of the consolation and assistance which is offered you. If you give way to despair you will frustrate all our kind endeavours to accommodate matters, and restore you to your parents.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

Pardon me, my amiable friend; but your innocent and dutiful mind can form no idea of the pangs which tear the wretched heart of a child, conscious of disobedience to a tender parent. Surely no wickedness on earth can exceed this crime!—I am distracted with the thoughts of what I have done, and what may be the consequence.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

I have no doubt but that Mr. Ravens will be easily reconciled to you, when it is represented to him, that you are really sorry for your offence, and I insist on your considering yourself amongst us as on a footing of equality.

Mrs. BENFIELD.

O! madam! I can never summon resolution to meet his eye.—I can never shew my face in the world

as his daughter : whatever rank I may claim from my relation to him, I have degraded myself to the lowest by an imprudent connection. O ! hide me from mankind !—hide me, if possible, from myself ! Let me expiate by *humility* the guilt of *disobedience*.

Miss AMELIA.

I think, my dear *Maria*, you had best go into another room with Mrs. *Benfield*. Perhaps, when alone, your efforts to soothe her may be more successful.

Miss LOVELESS.

I will take your advice, my dear. Come, Mrs. *Benfield*. [*they go out.*]

Miss AMELIA.

I am sure poor Mrs. *Benfield's* distress is enough to warn any young person from marrying without the consent of their parents.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

It is indeed. I wonder where your papa is ? I long for his return : since we must not see poor *Juliana* yet, let us go and amuse ourselves with a
book ;

book ; step into papa's parlour and fetch me one from the book-case.

Miss AMELIA.

It will be a *new* kind of amusement to me. I wish I had more relish for books ; but perhaps a taste for reading may come in a retired life. [*She goes out and returns with two books, then speaks ; during her absence Mrs. Loveless sits in a pensive posture.*]

I have brought the two first I cast my eyes on, for I have no judgment or knowledge to direct my choice.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Well, give me one, my dear : it is a chance but it will furnish me with *new instructions*.

[*They both sit down and read ; in a short time Mrs. Loveless puts down her book and speaks.*]

I am sorry to say, that though what I have been reading, exactly suits my present circumstances. I am not capable of fixing my attention on the subject.

Miss

Miss AMELIA.

I have been reading in the *Adventurer* the journal of a fine lady, which so properly ridicules the life of one, that I feel quite confounded and shocked at having been ambitious of this character; and am determined for the future to act like a rational creature.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

I have formed the same resolutions; but, alas! my dear, ill habits have taken deeper root in my mind than in yours, and will require more pains to eradicate: however, I will not despair.

[Enter Mr. Loveless.]

Mr. LOVELESS, [taking up the books which the ladies laid down.]

Your servant ladies. So you have taken possession of my books during my absence?

Mrs. LOVELESS.

We have indeed: since we have resolved to relinquish *frivolous amusements*, what can we do in the absence of our friends, but seek entertainment from the works of the learned? If *Amelia* and I pursue our plan, we perhaps shall, in time, surprise you

as much with our *erudition*, as we have before shocked you with our *ignorance*: but you and Mrs. Sutton must direct our studies.

Mr. LOVELESS.

You cannot appoint me to a more pleasing office: I long to present dear *Amelia* with a little library, and shall set about the selection of it the first leisure hour, in order to make the purchase of the books as soon as I go to town; but I shall not proceed without Mrs. Sutton's advice, of whose taste I have the highest opinion.

Miss AMELIA.

You are very good, sir; I shall endeavour to derive advantage from your kindness.

[Enter Mrs. Sutton, accompanied by Miss Sutton and Miss Fanny.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Well, my dear ladies, how do you find yourselves now? you see I have left you but to return with increased forces.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

They are your *auxiliaries*, and engaged in the cause of friendship, and as such must be welcome to me:

I am

I am indebted to your kindness, madam, for more serenity of mind than I could possibly have obtained by my own weak efforts, after such affecting conflicts. But I have met with a great mortification during your absence, from an unsuccessful attempt which I have made to amuse myself with a *book of morality*. I have so accustomed myself to the reading of *Novels*, that I fear I have lost the capacity of deriving instruction from other books.

Mrs. SUTTON.

O! that is not the case, I dare say! But you must wean your mind by degrees from the *light reading* you have been used to, and not attempt very grave authors at once. *Fable* and *Allegory*, with an agreeable mixture of *Poetry*, would, in my opinion, be proper to *begin* with, from which you might proceed to *History*, and *gradually* bring yourself to take delight in books of *piety* and *morality*. Miss *Amelia*, I have a new publication, which, as I subscribed for several sets, I will beg leave to present to you: it is called the *Six Princesses of Babylon*, and relates the

VOL. II.

H

history

history of their travels towards the Temple of Virtue*.

Miss AMELIA.

I shall read whatever you recommend, madam, with my best attention. I am sure I have great need of a *guide to the Temple of Virtue*. How do you do, my dear *Miss Sutton* and *Miss Fanny*? I was impatient to see you: you have heard, to be sure, that dear *Juliana* is likely to be restored to us again?

Miss SUTTON.

With the highest satisfaction, we have; and I most sincerely congratulate you on the happy and unexpected change.

Miss FANNY SUTTON.

Accept of my congratulations also, my dear. I hope we shall all enjoy many happy days together but where is *Miss Loveless*?

* The author of these Dramas has not the least *personal* knowledge of the writer of the above-mentioned work; but thinking it an ingenious performance, and understanding from the dedication, that an extensive sale was of consequence to her, was willing to give what little assistance she cou'd towards promoting it.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

She retired with her friend Mrs. *Benfield*, in hopes of composing her spirits, which were greatly agitated. I never saw a poor creature so humbled in my life! I will send for Miss *Loveless*, [*she rings the bell a servant enters*] If Miss *Loveless* is disengaged, tell her, we wish for her company [*servant goes out.*] I apprehend, that you, Mrs. *Sutton*, and Mr. *Loveless*, have been using some means to restore Mrs. *Benfield* to her parents.

[*Enter Miss Loveless.*]

Mrs. LOVELESS.

How have you left your friend, dear *Maria*?

Miss LOVELESS.

I have at length succeeded so far, as to prevail on her to lie down, and endeavour to get to sleep; but I fear she will long be a prey to the bitterest remorse.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

I hope her constitution will sustain the shock, and do, most sincerely pity her; but is not her father a still greater object of compassion, who does not deserve the misery of mind which she has brought on

him? But you were enquiring, Mrs. *Loveless*, what means Mr. *Loveless* and I had been employing in her behalf? you were right in your conjecture; that it was on her account I summoned him to my house; which, on a less important business, would, at such a time, have been impertinent: I hope you excuse me?

Mrs. LOVELESS.

Most certainly, my dear madam! I have this day felt so powerfully the comfort of your friendship, that I should be sorry you should be restrained from exerting it for others, by those ceremonious punctilios, which, I hope, my mind has now got above; but what could Mr. *Loveless* do?

Mrs. SUTTON.

I must first tell you, that on my return to my lodgings, I found Mrs. *Rawlins* and Miss *Gorwer* waiting for me. It seems, Mr. and Mrs. *Rawlins* came the day before to spend a week or two with Mr. *Gorwer* at *Redlands*, where he has lately taken a house; Miss *Gorwer* having visited us since we came to *Bristol*, mentioned this circumstance to Mrs. *Rawlins*, who resolved to call on me, in hopes that

Maria

Maria might be able to give her some information concerning the unhappy fugitive. The letter I sent this morning, of course has not yet reached her hands ; but by conversing with *Mrs. Rawlins*, I had an opportunity of saying more in *Mrs. Benfield's* favour, than a letter could comprise ; and I took the liberty of sending for *Mr. Loveless* as a joint advocate.

Miss LOVELESS.

And what success have you had, my dear madam ?

Mrs. SUTTON.

As much, my love, as I could reasonably expect : *Mrs. Rawlins* is all gentleness and compassion, and would, I am sure, immediately receive her daughter home ; but *Mr. Rawlins's* consent must be obtained first ; and that she cannot ask at present, because his mind has been greatly irritated by the ill behaviour of his son-in-law, who has been insolent enough to go to his house and demand his wife, under pretence, that she has eloped from him : not that he wants to live with her, but merely to extort money from her father.

Miss LOVELESS.

I am shocked to hear this, perhaps we shall soon have the wretch amongst us.

Mr. LOVELESS.

I can remove your fears on that head; my dear; for Mrs. Rawlins informed us, that Mr. Rawlins has prevailed on him to go to the *East Indies*, where he has procured him a post, and has put a sum of money into the hands of the captain who takes him over, to equip him for the voyage, and supply him with necessaries on his arrival in *India*.

Miss LOVELESS,

I rejoice to hear it!

Miss AMELIA.

Mrs. Benfield has, I dare say, lived in constant dread of his discovering her retreat, and molesting her quiet.

Miss FANNY SUTTON.

I imagine she has. What a miserable life must a poor young creature lead who has formed such a disgraceful connection! I cannot conceive a more mortifying circumstance than to be married to a wretch ones family is ashamed to own.

Mrs.

Mrs. SUTTON.

I could give you histories of several young ladies who have involved themselves in the utmost difficulties by such acts of indiscretion; but as I have no reason to think my dear girls, or any of the young ladies now present, stand in need of farther admonition on this subject, there is no occasion to multiply instances. That before their eyes would be a sufficient antidote for them, were any necessary.]

Miss LOVELESS.

I flattered myself, dear madam, you would have been able to restore my friend to the favour of her parents. What will become of her if her father should, after all, reject her? I am sure she would break her heart.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

She may continue here, my dear, till the reconciliation is completed, which I make no doubt will in time be brought about, as her cause is in such good hands.

Miss FANNY SUTTON.

Surely, my good sir, if it was represented to Mr.

Ratcliff

Rawlins how very penitent his daughter is, he must relent.

Mr. LOVELESS.

Mr. *Rawlins* is a very good man, Miss *Fanny*, and will act as a Christian, I make no doubt; but consider, his feelings must have been very distressing ones, and some time must be allowed to conquer them. Consider also, the disgrace his daughter has brought upon a reputable family, and her former disobedient behaviour, and then you cannot wonder if he withholds his forgiveness, at least till he is sure that her penitence is sincere.

Miss LOVELESS.

I would answer for that, papa.

Mr. LOVELESS.

Well, *Maria*, the day may be near, and I sincerely hope it is, when *your testimony* in her favour may be heard by Mr. *Rawlins*. In the mean time, have patience, and rejoice that Mrs. *Rawlins* is her friend, who will certainly exert her influence, from which we may expect success.

Mrs. SUTTON.

You may depend upon it, Miss *Loveless*, that I shall

shall take every step in my power to effect the desired reconciliation, and to comfort the poor mourner. It may perhaps be better for her that it is brought on by degrees, than that in her present weak state of spirits she should be called to a trial which she has not yet fortitude to sustain.

Miss LOVELESS.

I know, my dear madam, the benevolence of your disposition will lead you to pay a ready attention to this deplorable case; and I am sure my dear papa will not be remiss. My dear mamma has promised Mrs. *Benfield* an asylum, and *Amelia* has assured her of her friendly offices. I have been told of *Juliana's* kindness to her since her recovery, all which must contribute to restore her tranquility; and I think things are in such a train, that I may venture to comfort her with hopes; that her good father will be induced to wipe the tears of repentant sorrow from her eyes, and that she may once more know the sweets of peace.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

She will receive the forgiveness of all good people,

people, but much I fear she will never obtain her own.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Her self-condemnation is very commendable, madam, and I hope her follies will ever be remembered by her, with that degree of regret, which will make her abhor the thoughts of repeating them. But if her reformation is sincere, she may enjoy a great deal of happiness in striving to repair her faults, by future good behaviour, and seeing her endeavours kindly accepted. Not so much, to be sure, as if she had never deviated from the path of duty.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

I hope I shall myself experience this kind of satisfaction. My eyes are now open; I despise the allurements of the gay world, and long for a quiet retreat. It is my earnest wish, Mr. *Loveless*, to go to that house which I once so foolishly despised. There it should be my daily endeavour to restore the comforts you once enjoyed in it. My own deficiencies will prevent my succeeding in my desire of imitating the excellencies of *Maria's* mother; but you shall

shall find me dutiful to you, and affectionate to your child.

Mr. LOVELESS.

Your proposal delights me : I will write to have the house got ready for our reception immediately. But I now particularly miss an old friend, whose assistance on this occasion would be very useful.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

You mean *Mrs. Cartwright*. I was myself thinking of her, but fear she is too valuable to *Mrs. Sutton* to be given up : besides, I used her so unkindly, that she will be afraid to live with me again.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Mrs. Cartwright, madam, has so liberal a mind, that I am sure she retains no resentment for behaviour, which proceeded from your not knowing her worth. I will engage to say, she will be very ready to superintend your family in a house which she left with regret ; but I shall have a great loss ; you really commit cruel depredations upon me—What ! rob me of *two* of my household at once ? I must have my revenge—and thus I will take it. *Mrs. Benfield* shall positively supply the place of *Mrs. Cartwright*

to

to me and Miss *Juliana*, when she is dismissed by Dr. *Burgefs*, shall be my guest.

Mrs. LOVELESS.

I cannot resist your kind offer : it will be a great advantage to dear *Juliana* to be under your good management ; for *my part*, I am so ignorant in respect to invalids, that it is probable I might commit some fatal error : but one more condition I must make, my dear madam, which is, that as soon as we are settled, you favour me with your company at my house. Remember I am your *scholar*, and if you leave me too long by myself I may relapse into my former follies.

Mrs. SUTTON.

I agree to your condition, with all my heart ; and as the distance between us is not very great, we may frequently interchange visits. I shall make a point of staying at *Bristol* as long as you do, in order to take Miss *Juliana* and Mrs. *Benfield* with me.

Mr. LOVELESS.

What a happy day is this to me ! I now look forward with expectation of enjoying, once more, the dear delights of domestic peace.

Mr.

Mrs. LOVELESS

I flatter myself with the hopes that I shall be a sincere partaker of it, and heartily bid adieu to the delusive pleasures of the gay world.

Miss AMELIA.

Balls! masquerades! routs! and all the fatiguing, satiating murderers of time, which I have hitherto courted, I relinquish you without a sigh! and shall cheerfully welcome the joys of rural life, which I have formerly despised. No more shall my cheeks be painted but by the hand of health.

Mrs. SUTTON.

Whilst you form this wise resolution, my dear young friend, of altering your course of living, be careful of not running into a contrary extreme. *Moderate* amusements were intended to *sweeten the cares of life*, and may be *innocently enjoyed*; it is making them the *business* of it that is *blameable*.

Miss AMELIA.

I am under your direction, madam; mould me to your wishes.

Mrs. SUTTON.

I shall have great cause to be proud of my scholar, I make no doubt, since I have *humility* to build on as a *foundation*, on which every virtue may be erected; *without* which, none can be brought to perfection. If I may be allowed to begin my *first lesson* now, I would recommend to your immediate practice, my dear, these few short rules. Entertain a moderate opinion of your own abilities; consider that you have much to learn, and exert your industry to redeem lost time: instead of coveting the applauses of the *gay world*, endeavour to obtain the esteem of the *worthy* and *rational* part of it; and in every action have a regard to the glory of God, and the good of your fellow creatures. Command my best services ever—But, my dear girls, [*to Miss Suttons*] it is time for us to take our leave; to-morrow, ladies, we shall have the pleasure of enquiring after Miss *Fa-liana*, and hope to see her much recovered. [*They take leave and the scene closes.*]

T H E E N D.

THE
MATERNAL SISTER,
A D R A M A,
IN THREE ACTS.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Miss CLEVELAND, aged 18.

Miss CLARISSA, 15.

Miss EMMA, 14.

Miss CATHERINE, 11.

Miss SOPHIA, 8.

Master EDWARD, 10.

Master HENRY, 9.

Miss FRANCES, 9 months.

Miss FOWLER, 16 years.

Attendants.

SCENE—Mr. CLEVELAND's House in *London*.

THE
MATERNAL SISTER,
A DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE, *the Breakfast Parlour at Mr. Cleveland's.*

[*Mr. and Miss Cleveland at breakfast.*]

Mr. CLEVELAND.

GIVE me another dish of tea, *Jemima*, and I will be gone.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Shall we not have the pleasure of your company to dinner, sir?

Mr. CLEVELAND.

To dinner, child! What pleasure can I have in dining at home, where there is nothing but noise,

confusion, and disturbance? Happy is the man, who is not plagued with a family of children! What a fool was I to marry, and involve myself in endless expence! Not a day passes but I am pestered with some tradesman's bill or other. From the *butchers* and *bakers*, that one would think every person in this house was a *cormorant*: from the *linen-drapers*, *shoe-makers*, and *hosiery*, that instead of *children*, I had an *army of soldiers* always upon the march to provide for; they wear their things out at such a rate!

Miss CLEVELAND.

I have reason to believe, dear sir, that the servants have taken advantage of poor mamma's ill state of health, and have been wasteful and extravagant in every respect, and by this means your expences are increased beyond what they would naturally be.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Ill state of health! yes, your mother has brought herself into a fine condition by her continual racketing; and because I had not charge enough before, she must now be supplied with money to spend at the *South of France*. I cannot go on at this rate! my estate is out at elbows already!

Miss CLEVELAND, [with emotion.]

Pardon me, sir! but give me leave to observe, that my poor mamma lived in the fashionable world; her connections required, that she should enter a great deal into the gaities of life: her ill health surely deserves compassion!

Mr. CLEVELAND.

'True, my dear girl; and sincerely do I regret her situation; but my mind is so distressed with the state of my finances, that I scarcely know what I do or say.

Miss CLEVELAND.

We must then, all of us, study to live accordingly; for my part, sir, I am willing to do every thing in my power to lessen your expences: my good aunt has taken great pains to instruct me in the different branches of domestic œconomy, and has promised to favor me with her advice. I will endeavour to practice her lessons in the best manner I can: my errors you will kindly excuse; and I hope, by assiduous attention, to improve daily. If agreeable to you, sir, I will undertake to supply the house-keeper's place myself. Mrs. Newton has, this morning,

ing, expressed her desire to go away, on my objecting to some superfluous articles in the bill of fare for to-day.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Then let her go !

Miss CLEVELAND.

I will also, for the *present*, undertake the instruction of the *younger children*, if agreeable to you, sir. My aunt says, she cannot think the school *Catherine* and *Sophia* were at, before they came home to be inoculated, by any means a good one, and to send them to a better will be very expensive : to teach them in the best manner I can, will be a delightful employment to me ; and if you will permit *Clarissa* and *Emma* to leave school, I make no doubt they will readily assist me in it. They are now *great girls*, and what their *school education* at present costs you, will be a considerable saving. The coach is gone to fetch them home for the holidays ; will you give me permission to communicate my scheme to them, and try if they will concur with it ?

Mr.

A DRAMA, in THREE ACTS.

7

Mr. CLEVELAND.

You talk like a good girl *Jemima*—an excellent girl! but I fear you undertake too much; however, do as you will; my expences *must* be drawn into a *narrower compass* by some means or other; I shall be absolutely ruined else. [*Rising from the tea-table*] Adieu, my dear! I shall see you again in the evening.

Miss CLEVELAND.

And will you not dine with me, dear sir? consider how long I have been absent from you—that my sisters are coming home.—Indeed your presence is necessary to give me consequence in the house, and to enforce the authority you have been pleased to invest me with. I shall not, without your countenance, be able to put my plans in execution: besides, what shall I do if the servants, who are already ripe for rebellion, should insult me? Upon my word, my courage will fail me, if you will not stay at home *this day* at least.

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Femina, you have a most engaging way with you; there is no denying you any thing: I *will* stay at home; but *how to employ myself here* is the question? It is a *strange* place to me, in which for many years I have been accustomed merely to *sleep* and *breakfast*, unless when the necessity of entertaining company obliged me to *dine* and *sup*; but on these occasions, the thoughts of my family and expences were drowned in mirth and gaiety. If I sit *alone* and *reflect* I shall go distracted.

Miss CLEVELAND.

You shall *not* be *alone*, I will bring my work and sit with you as soon as I have given some necessary directions; in the mean time, I will send two little companions, who will, I am sure, delight you; *Edward* and *Henry* came home a month ago on account of a fever in the school; and I have another pleasure in store for you—The sight of dear little *Frances*.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Frances! How am I to see her? She is ten miles off; her nurse can scarcely have brought her at this early hour.

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

I hope, dear sir, you will not think I have presumed too much on the honor you have done me, in appointing me to be my mother's deputy, when I inform you, that I have ventured to bring *Frances* home, without first obtaining your permission for doing so : but indeed I found her in such a situation as I could not have *left her in* for the world ; and I am sure you would have been angry with me if I had waited for your return.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

I cannot comprehend your meaning, *Jemima* : the nurse was well recommended, as I understood ; and the child appeared to be in a very thriving state when I last saw her.

Miss CLEVELAND.

She was greatly altered then indeed, sir, when I found her ; and I have reason to think would have perished through neglect and bad management, if I had not been fortunate enough to call on her as I did. You know, that nurse's house is in the road from my aunt's hither, so affection led me to stop as I was coming home, in order to see my little sister : but
what

what was the surprise, both of my aunt and me, at finding the cottage door wide open, though exposed to the cold easterly wind; the floor of the room wet; several panes in the casements broken; and the dear little baby lying in a cradle, as dirty as a beggar, crying in the most pitious manner imaginable? I approached the cradle with an agitation of mind not to be described, and took the dear little creature up; at the same time desiring my aunt's maid, who accompanied us, to search the house for the nurse; but her search was fruitless; at last, in the garden, she found a boy of six years old, who, it seems had been left by his mother to rock the cradle; but who, tired of his employment, had escaped to play, and left her by herself.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

But what was become of the nurse?

Miss CLEVELAND.

On enquiring in the neighbourhood, we learnt, that this inhuman woman, who had undertaken to perform a mother's part, made it a daily custom to neglect her infant charge, that she might range from house to house, hearing and relating idle tales.

thought-

thoughtless of the dear babe's wants, unmindful of her own obligation : so with my aunt's advice, I resolved to take her home with me.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Say no more, *Jemima*, or I shall be ready to cast reflections on your mother, who, if she was not able to nurse *herself*, should at least have been more circumspect in the choice of a substitute. If she would have done as I at first desired her, and acted a mother's part by *you* her *eldest*, I have reason to think we should have been a *united happy family*; for I once loved *little children*; and had *mine* been managed properly, should have placed my delight in them; but alas! I have known no comfort with them. Whilst at nurse, they were so shy there was no inviting them to come near one; and when they returned home, they were so unmanageable I was glad to have them kept in the nursery, and from thence sent to school as soon as possible. But let me see the little sufferer. I am exceedingly affected with the account you have given me of her. I hope she is not in danger of dying?

Miss CLEVELAND.

No, sir; my good aunt staid with us till *Friday* last, when she was obliged to go home for a few days; by my following her directions, *Frances* is quite charmingly. I left her in a fine sleep, and ordered the maid to take her after breakfast into the park, from whence I suppose she is not yet returned; when she comes in I will bring her to you. In the mean time, will you permit me to fetch *Edward* and *Henry*? but before they make their appearance, I must confess, that I have taken advantage of being here a month before you returned from the West, and have elected myself into the office of their governess, as I thought even *my poor instruction* was better than none at all. Not without their consent though I assure you, sir: *Catherine* and *Sophia* have also done me the honor of submitting to my tuition, so that I have really a little school here. Should my dear papa find cause to give me a smile of approbation, when my young pupils exhibit their performances to him, how happy shall I think myself.

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

My dear, my amiable child! in what words shall I express my admiration of your conduct? The present emotions of my heart are too much for me. I must compose my mind before I shall be fit to receive my other children.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Well, my dear sir, I will then, with your leave, retire. I expect to find my scholars waiting for me; but believe I must give them a holiday, as we are in expectation of my sisters.

[Miss Cleveland goes out.]

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Sick of the world, and almost weary of my own existence, little did I expect ever to find such pleasure as I at this moment feel, in *my own house* especially—the *last place* in which I should have gone in search of it. What a delightful girl is *Jemima*! How was it possible that I should be so blind to her merit, as to consent to her leaving us to live with her aunt? Alas! for a long time it has been my endeavour to *forget* all my *tender connections*. But I will strive to *recover* those feelings which I have

taken so much pains to *suppress*. My heart already glows with *paternal affection*. I long to weep over my children—to *press them to my bosom*—to shew a *father's fondness*. O, *Jemima! Jemima!* I must follow you: I can no longer restrain the ardent desire I have to behold you, acting in the double character of *mother and sister*.

[*He goes out hastily.*]

SCENE *changes to another apartment.*

Miss Cleveland sits at a table, on which are a pair of globes, a book of prints, several maps, &c. Miss Catherine, Miss Sophia, Master Edward and Master Henry standing by her.

Miss CATHERINE.

I wish you had time, *Jemima*, to teach me to draw maps again to-day.—I should like, when I am old enough, to make a little Atlas.

Miss CLEVELAND.

So you shall, my love, if you please, but to-day I cannot conveniently attend to you; so I have looked up some nice pieces of gauze and silk, and should be glad if you would begin dressing the doll which you bought for *Miss Maria Dawson*.

Miss

Miss CATHERINE.

So I will then.—Will you help me, *Sophia*?

Miss SOPHIA.

With all my heart, *Catherine*, since we are not to draw maps.

Master EDWARD.

And what shall I do, *Jemima*?

Miss CLEVELAND.

Please yourself, my dear. I dare say you will not get into any mischief. But you had best consult with your brother *Henry*. You certainly do not wish to play by *yourself*?

Master EDWARD.

I should like to look over this book of drawings, to see if there is one I can copy, and then to go in to the garden.

[*Mr. Cleveland, who must be supposed to have entered at the beginning of the scene, but to have stopped at the door, after viewing his little family, unobserved by them, turns aside to hide his emotion, which having in some measure suppressed, he advances, and catches Miss Cleveland in his arms, as she rises to offer him*

her chair ;—after kissing her affectionately, he speaks.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Thus, my dear *Jemima*, do I confirm you in your office.—My dear boys and girls, what a kind sister you have got ! Come, let me kiss each of you. [*He kisses them all.*] Now go on with your various employments. But I think you said, *Jemima*, that you would give the little ones a holiday to-day ? Who will walk with me ?

Master EDWARD.

I will, papa, if you please ; and if it is agreeable to *Henry* to go, *Jemima* says we shall always be happiest together, so we have agreed to go partners in all sports and all play-things.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Jemima is perfectly right ; brothers and sisters should have but one interest. I am glad to find you so ready to take your sister's advice ; it will be always for your advantage to do so, I will engage to say.—Well, *Henry*, are you for a walk ?

Master HENRY.

O, yes, papa ! May I take my skipping rope ?

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

By all means, and let *Edward* take his. I shall like to see which of you is the most active.—Give me another kiss, *Catherine* and *Sophia*.—Adieu ! *Jemima*. I am going to take a walk in Hyde Park; I dare say we shall be back soon after your sisters arrive.

[*He goes out with his sons.*]

Miss CATHERINE.

I believe I must beg the favour of you, sister, to cut out a shift for this doll.

Miss SOPHIA.

And a petticoat for me to make, if you please, sister. I wish I could cut out things myself.

Miss CLEVELAND.

All-in good time, *Sophia*. When you can make them properly, I will teach you to cut them out ; in the mean time, I will readily do it for you.

Miss CATHERINE.

Now for a needle and some thread, and then I shall have done troubling you.

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

O! this puts me in mind of the present I have got for each of you.

[Stepping to a closet she takes out two work baskets, and presents one to each of her sisters.]

Here, Catherine! Here, Sophia! I bought these little baskets on purpose for you. In them you will, I hope, find all you at present stand in need of. But one condition I must make,—that you always keep them in very nice order.

Miss SOPHIA.

Thank you, sister! Look, Catherine! here is a pincushion, a huswife, a set of thread papers, a pair of scissors, and a thimble.

Miss CATHERINE.

I have got the same exactly.—Thank you, Femima.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Well, my dears, now you may, if you please, go and work in the nursery.

[The young ladies put their work into the baskets, and as they are going out, Miss Sophia speaks.]

Miss SOPHIA.

Be sure to call us down when our sisters come.

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

Most certainly, my love. [*They go out.*] What a happy prospect presents itself to my view. The dear children improve daily. My father, though greatly agitated, seems much happier than when we first met in the morning. I cannot help flattering myself that he will settle his heart amongst us; and perhaps my mother may recover, and we may yet be a united family.

[*Enter a Maid.*]

MAID.

O! Miss *Cleveland*! I have been waiting for you these two hours. I have got a letter for you, and from such a sweet, pretty, fine gentleman, you cannot think.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I am surprized, *Betty*, that you dare to take such a liberty with me.—Pray return the letter to the person you had it from, and tell him, were he a *Prince*, I should not encourage a *clandestine correspondence*. I shall not open the letter, I assure you, *Betty*, but will take care to inform my papa what kind of a servant he has in the house.

MAID.

MAID.

What kind of a servant, indeed ! I believe if I go, I shall not leave my betters behind me.—La ! Miss ! most young ladies like to have *louvre's*. Why Miss *Clarissa* has one, I assure you ; and I do not know but what Miss *Emma* may too.

Miss CLEVELAND, [*aside.*]

I am shocked at this intelligence ;—however, it may be of use to me. [*To the maid.*] I do not believe you, *Betty*, my sisters would not be so *indiscrete*.

BETTY, [*smiling.*]

Would not they, though ? I know better ; and if Miss *Clarissa* does not take a trip to Scotland one of these days, it will not be her fault.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I assure you, *Betty*, I will not allow you to take such freedoms with my sisters.—I desire you to go and pursue your proper business.

MAID.

Well, Miss, if you will not take the letter, I must carry it back ; but I fear the poor gentleman will break his heart.

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

How dare you mention to me again the letter I before reproved you for offering to me?—Leave me this instant.

MAID.

Dear me, miss! I am sure your mamma was not so proud to poor servants as you are, nor yet so hard-hearted to gentlemen. She could not have contrived to run away from school so cleverly, if she had. I dare say my master sent many and many a letter by a servant to her, so he has no right to find fault with me.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I will not hear another disrespectful word of my parents.—If you do not leave me I will acquaint my papa with your insolence immediately.

MAID, [*as she is going out.*]

If you tell of *one* you must tell of *all*, and a fine job that will be.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I am hurt beyond description with the discovery this girl has made, respecting my sisters, and her insolence to my parents distresses me beyond measure.

sure. However, I trust that time and patience, with the blessing of heaven, will carry me through the difficulties in which I am at present involved.— I wonder *Clarissa* and *Emma* are not arrived; the coach went for them very early this morning.

[*Enter a footman announcing a lady.*]

FOOTMAN.

Miss *Fowler*, madam,

[*Enter Miss Fowler.*]

Miss CLEVELAND.

Good morning to you, my dear Miss *Fowler*! I almost despaired of having the pleasure of seeing you. Why, I have been at home a *month*, my dear.

Miss FOWLER.

I should have waited on you before, Miss *Cleveland*, but when you came home, I was preparing to go to Lady *Newland*'s. You do not visit that family you know, and I could not come by myself, for we had engagements for every hour of the day. I left her ladyship but yesterday, and have again so much work to do, that I knew not well how to spare time to come even now.

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

Pardon me, Miss *Fowler*, but I really cannot help expressing my surprize, that a young lady, who has no *brothers* and *sisters* to work for, and whose *mamma* is so very notable, can have so much to do, as scarcely to find time to visit an old friend and school-fellow.

Miss FOWLER.

You do not consider, my dear, how the *fashions* change, and that I am obliged to do all the work *myself*; for *mamma* will not suffer me to have my things made at a *milliner's*; and the last *mantua-maker's* bill *papa* paid he made such a fuss about it, only because I had my gown altered, to look like other people, you cannot think. I am sure I worked so hard for a fortnight before I went to Lady *Newland's*, that when I got there I was quite ill. Every night did I sit up till one or two o'clock. *Papa* insisted on my being at breakfast by eight notwithstanding, and I heard nothing but grumbling all day against *ladies of quality*. I am sure I am so unhappy at home I know not what to do. Every thing is in such a different style to what I find it in the families

I have lately visited amongst, that I cannot enjoy myself in the least.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I am sorry to hear you say so, my dear. I cannot think your papa and mamma would deny you any *reasonable gratification*. But give me leave to say, I was afraid, nay, I sometimes took the liberty of telling you at *school*, that your ambition of making intimacies with the young ladies of the highest ranks there, and your great love of dress, would expose you to many inconveniences and mortifications.

Miss FOWLER.

I think it is very *natural*, Miss *Cleveland*, for young people who have tolerable good persons, to wish to appear to the best advantage, and to keep the best company they can. Why is a girl, of *inferior rank*, sent to one of the first schools, but with a view to form *connections*, and to put her into the way of *making her fortune*.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I rather supposed our parents made choice of those schools, from an idea that the *instruction* was *proportionable* to the *expence*. To be sure, it is expected

that

that every one who goes to them should make an elegant appearance ; and on this account many people are of opinion, that they should be appropriated to the children of persons whose situation in life will enable them to continue to dress them in the same manner, and give them an adequate fortune.—It is certainly a sad thing to have *desires* beyond one's *circumstances*.

MISS FOWLER.

I positively cannot be happy without *fine cloaths* and *jewels*, and my father says he cannot afford to let me dress in a splendid way. I hate to walk on foot, and to ride in a *hackney* coach is intolerable. I therefore intend to ask him to send me over to the *East Indies*. I doubt not but I shall make my fortune there ; and instead of being obliged to make my own things, as I now do, shall have all my work done for me, and shall have slaves to wait on me, and carry me in a palanquin.

MISS CLEVELAND.

We differ widely in sentiment, my dear Miss Fowler.—I should think it the greatest *punishment* in the world to go to *India* on such an expedition. All

the riches of Peru would not tempt me to place myself in so *indelicate* a situation. Can a young lady so far lay aside the *modesty* of her sex, as to embark in a ship, where, for months she will be under the necessity of associating with *men* only? On her arrival at the place of her destination, can she take out her ornaments, and embellish her person in the most advantageous manner, that she may attract the notice of *some man* of whom she has not the least knowledge, who, desirous of having a *handsome wife*, stands waiting to see what *cargo of ladies* the ship has brought over?

Miss FOWLER.

You have a strange idea of going to *India*, Miss *Cleveland*—You are so *grave*, my dear!—When *ambition* is in view, such punctilios must be laid aside. Go, I positively *will*, so do not say any more against it. Perhaps I may be a *Nabob's* lady. Miss *Danvers*, our school-fellow, I hear is married extremely well:—and then think of Mrs. *Dennison*. What splendor she lives in!

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

As for Miss *Danvers*, I understand she is married to a very *old* gentleman, disagreeable in his temper to the greatest degree. Whatever her *fortune* may be, I do not think her *happiness* is increased, my dear. And as for Mrs. *Dennison*, she does, to be sure, live in a most *splendid* manner; but would you change *constitutions* with her, Miss *Fowler*? Her *health* fell a *sacrifice* to her *ambition*. Would *you* be content to purchase *grandeur* at the same price?

Miss FOWLER.

La! my dear! you are *conjuring* up all the *bugbears* in the world to frighten me from my purpose. How do you know that the climate of *India* will *disagree* with *me*?

Miss CLEVELAND.

Very true, my dear; *naturally* it might *not* do so; but few constitutions can stand against *East Indian* luxury. Their *chaian* pepper, their *spices*, and other *instruments of death*, as I must call them, are enough to undermine the strongest constitution.

Miss FOWLER.

As for *luxury*, Miss *Cleveland*, there is enough of that in *England*. I am sure the *East Indies* themselves cannot exceed us in that particular; if I may form a judgment from the people I have lately been amongst.

Miss CLEVELAND.

And even this, as I have heard it observed by people of understanding, was originally imported from *India*; but it does not universally prevail here? Let me persuade you, my dear Miss *Fowler*, to change your purpose. If the *East India* gentlemen must have *English* wives, let them come here and seek them. Change your purpose—accommodate your mind to your circumstances: moderate your ambition. Your papa can afford to dress you as well as you *ought* to dress, and I dare say, is willing to do so. Can you bear the thoughts of leaving both your parents to set out on an adventure which may turn out contrary to your expectation? would it not be better to leave jewels, and other rich ornaments, to people whose rank in life require them to distinguish themselves from their inferiors, by the splendour

splendour of their attire, and to enjoy with thankfulness the blessings you already possess?

Miss FOWLER.

It is a pity, my dear friend, that you did not live in the golden days of queen *Beis*. I dare say you would have liked a good program suit of clothes, strong enough to last your life; and would have been glad to breakfast with the maids of honor on cold round of beef! How happy would it be for the nation, if you were queen of *England*, that you might explode *luxury* from our *tables*, and make *sumptuary laws* for *dress*!

Miss CLEVELAND.

Unless I were an *arbitray monarch*, I fear I should not succeed in such an attempt, Miss *Fowler*. As far as *example* can go, our present gracious queen instructs her subjects, by observing the utmost propriety and moderation in both the particulars you mention. But I am sorry to say her amiable example has not its due influence. There seems to be a general emulation among all sorts of people to outdo each other. Every rank presses upon the next above it, and by this means each seems under a kind

of

of necessity to go beyond its proper bounds in order to preserve the distinction due to it.

Miss FOWLER.

I protest, Miss *Cleveland*, you preach excellently well! What was your *text*, my dear? I declare I have forgot. I will learn short-hand that I may write down such fine discourses. It is pity you were not a *man*! you would certainly have been Archbishop of *Canterbury*. I hope you will marry a parson. If I meet with a reverend divine, that has more sense in his countenance than in his brain, I will speak a good word for you. A wife that can *make sermons* will be very acceptable to such an one.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I have been so accustomed to this kind of raillery, Miss *Fowler*, that I do not take offence at it; but it grieves me to see a friend under such an unhappy infatuation.

Miss FOWLER.

Well then, to be *serious*. You really think my *unhappiness* is all of my own making? Tell me now, would it not hurt you exceedingly to cut a *mean figure* amongst your companions? and should
you

you not ardently wish to be on an *equality* with them.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I have, you know had the same opportunities as yourself of making intimacies with ladies of rank, and still keep up an acquaintance with some of them; but believe me, my dear, I have not the most distant wish to vie with them in appearance. I think it much more desirable to be distinguished by the *propriety* of one's dress than by the *elegance* of it. Nay, I esteem it bad policy for any young woman to affect to *appear* what she *is not*. It naturally leads to an enquiry, *Who she is* and draws contempt and ridicule upon her.

Miss FOWLER.

Propriety of dress, I understand to be an exact conformity to the *mode*. How ridiculous and awkward a young lady looks who wears an *unfashionable cap* for instance. Why, my dear, if you were to go into a polite circle in that you have got on, you would be laughed at; besides, how horridly you put on your handkerchief! why I actually see your *chin*, and the *fall of your shoulders*!

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

I should, I hope, have sufficient fortitude to withstand the shock. I really thought my cap was, to use a *tonish* expression, a very *decent* one. It certainly was in fashion when I made it. I do not affect *singularity*, Miss Fowler; on the contrary, when I have *new* things, give directions to have them made like other peoples; but then I neither throw them away, nor cut them to pieces in conformity to every new whim.—But are you resolutely bent upon going to *India*?

Miss FOWLER.

Positively and *absolutely*. Lady Newland advises me to it of all things. Bless me! it is two o'clock! I am going to *Ranlagh* in the evening; and have got my *gown to trim*, a *hat to make*, and a *hundred* things besides to do.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I understood that you had made a number of *new* things within this month; will not some of those do?

Miss

Miss FOWLER.

Dear me, how you talk ! Do not you know that articles of *taste* and *fashion*, if ever so *charming* when first made, become *frightful* in a fortnight ?

Miss CLEVELAND.

I often hear those terms applied, as I think, very *inconsistent'y*.

Miss FOWLER.

Those who are *votaries* of *fashion* must bid adieu to *consistency*. Well, I must take my leave : I am sorry you disapprove my scheme, but I shall find enow to encourage me in it. I shall see you soon, I hope : good morning, my dear.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Your servant, Miss Fowler. [*rings the bell, then takes leave of Miss Fowler, who goes out.*]

I am glad my sisters were not present at this conversation. It shall be my care to keep them from an intimacy with Miss Fowler. How shocking it is to see *ingenuity* and *industry* perverted to such unworthy purposes ! My friend may be justly denominated one of the *slaves* of *fashion*. I am all impatience

patience to hear the secret which *Betty* wished to tell me; but it would be a meanness to be the confidant of one's servant. I will try if I can prevail on *Clarrissa* to explain the matter to me herself. I think I now hear the coach stop at the door. I will go and receive my sisters. [*She goes out.*]

END of ACT I.

A C T II.

SCENE, *Mrs. Cleveland's Dressing-Room.*

[*Miss Cleveland, Miss Clarissa, and Miss Emma, engaged in conversation*]

Miss CLEVELAND.

THE account which papa gave of mamma's health when he left her, was a very indifferent one. I have great apprehensions that she will not recover,

Miss EMMA.

I wish she would have taken me with her. I should have liked of all things to finish my education in *France*.

Miss CLEVELAND.

My dear *Emma*, your wish is a very inconsiderate one. Why should you desire to go to *France*,

when every polite and useful accomplishment may be acquired in *England*?

Miss EMMA.

I am quite tired with staying at Mrs. *Thoroughgood's*, and long to see a little of the world; but as my mamma is abroad, I suppose we must continue at school a great while longer.

Miss CLARISSA.

I mean to ask papa to let us be parlour boarders after the holidays.

Miss CLEVELAND.

And have you considered, my dear, that if he complies, the expence of your education will be greatly increased? Have you reflected that his expences must already be a heavy burden, as his family is so *numerous*?

Miss EMMA.

My papa is a man of considerable fortune, and I make no doubt, can afford to pay for us as parlour boarders, which will not be equal to what it would cost him to introduce us into the world. I must say, that *Clarissa's* scheme appears to me a very
good

good one. But I suppose, *you* are to set us all to rights, *Jemima*?

Miss CLEVELAND.

I will pass over the insinuation in the latter part of your speech without resentment, *Emma*, though it was a very unkind one. Let us not embitter this our first meeting for a long time with any disagreeable altercation. But since you have both formed those ideas respecting your papa's fortune, which you seem to suppose inexhaustible, I think it incumbent on me to give you some information which will, I hope, make a change in your sentiments. My father's expences already exceed his income; his heart is weighed down with care on this account. If we add to this oppression, we shall perhaps see him sink into the grave. Does not duty require that each of his children should exert themselves according to their different abilities, to lessen his disquietudes? I know not how you may be affected, *Clarissa* and *Emma*, but I feel the most ardent desire to make him happy.

Miss CLARISSA.

Are you sure of what you say, *Jemima*? That papa has been very *cross*, and, as I thought, *stingy*, for some time past, I have with pain observed—indeed I suffered severely by this circumstance last holidays. What with mamma's *fretfulness* and papa's *ill humour*, I am sure I had no comfort the whole month I was at home. I would not pass such another for the world.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I was exceedingly sorry it fell out so that I was in *Scotland* with my aunt at so unfortunate a time. I should otherwise have made a point of being at home that I might have attended upon mamma and kept you company. But, from the letters which were written to us, we only supposed that she had some slight indisposition; and it was a great shock to me indeed, to receive an account that the physician thought it necessary for her to go immediately to the South of *France*; that my father was going over with her, and wished to find me at home when he returned, as he wanted me to superintend the family. My aunt set off with me directly, and I arrived here
a month

a month ago; but my father did not come home till last night, having, since his arrival in *England*, made a circuit to view his estates. My aunt favoured me with her company here as long as she could, and will, I hope, soon return.

Miss EMMA.

Clarissa and I were sent for home one day to take leave of mamma. She looked dreadfully indeed, and had a most shocking cough. When she parted with us, she seemed greatly affected, and said, she feared she should never see us any more.

Miss CLARISSA.

She desired to be affectionately remembered to you *Jemima*, and said, she made no doubt you would supply her place in the family, in case she should die, much better than she had done. And, indeed I must say, that would be no difficult task, for never were children more neglected by a mother than we have all been by ours.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I am shocked to hear you talk in this manner, *Clarissa*! surely you forget that you are speaking of a parent?

Miss CLARISSA.

A parent, *Jemima* ! Does a woman who takes no care, and pays no attention to her children, deserve so endearing an appellation ? You may say what you will, but you cannot blind our eyes to mamma's fault ; nor can you ever expect us to love or reverence her, as we should have done, had she performed the mother's part ?

Miss CLEVELAND.

And who, my dear sisters, has given you authority to cancel the *divine law*, that you thus openly profess *not* to love and reverence your mother, when God has expressly enjoined us to *honor our parents* ? You really speak as if the relation between your mamma and you was *dissolved*.

Miss EMMA.

We have had but little reason, *Jemima*, to think of the connection ; and I am really astonished to hear you, who have been treated like an *alien*, talk in defence of mamma's indifference. Had she felt like many mothers whom I know, she could not have parted with her eldest child to live with a relation
who

who passes so much of her time at such a distance from her.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I must entreat my dear *Emma*, that you will not arraign my mother's conduct in respect to me: I assure you, that I consider myself as under obligations to both my parents, which I can never return; and so are every one of their children.

Miss CLARISSA.

*Obligations, *Jemima*!* I beseech you to name them?

Miss CLEVELAND.

I must beg of you, my dear, to carry your thoughts back to the time when you first came into the world, a little helpless infant; and tell me, were you then *able* to provide for yourself? if not, by what means have you been supplied with the necessaries of life from that time to the present hour?

Miss CLARISSA.

O! to be sure! papa and mamma have furnished us with the *necessaries of life*; that it was their indispensable duty to do.

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

We will allow that it was, as you say, their indispensable duty ; but is there no *reciprocal* duty on the *child's part* ? Is there no return of affection required for fifteen years comfortable subsistence ? Look down upon the lower ranks of life, and see what extremities of wretchedness many of the poorer sort of children endure for want of food and raiment ; and surely the reflection which the view will excite, must kindle in your heart a spark of gratitude towards those who have so amply provided for your defence against those evils.

Miss CLARISSA.

To be sure we could not have provided for our own wants in the *helpless state of infancy* ; but I never thought of this before.

Miss EMMA.

All this may be very true ; but still I think mamma has been greatly to blame in not keeping us under her *own eye*, and instructing us *herself*.

Miss CLEVELAND.

In respect to your first objection, my dear—are you sure that your mother had strength of constitution to

bear

bear the fatigue? And in regard to the other—are you certain that she had *leisure* for it? Let me ask you, my dear sister—have you been suffered to grow up without the instruction suitable to your situation in life? Has no expence been bestowed on your education? I am rather inclined to think that our dear parents have been put to many inconveniences through their desire to procure us the usual advantages.

Miss EMMA.

It must be owned that we elder ones have had a very genteel education, and were placed under a worthy governess.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Then I must desire you, my dear, as I just now did *Clarissa*, to look down on the *lower ranks of life*. Consider the deplorable ignorance of those poor children, who are destitute of instruction; and before you presume to say again, *Why did not my mamma teach me herself?* ask your own heart, Whether you have been grateful to her for the benefits she has bestowed upon you? and whether you have endeavoured to repay them as you ought to do? Make this enquiry

quiry with impartiality, my dear, and depend upon it, you will find more reason to condemn yourself than your parents.

Miss CLARISSA.

I really believe, *Jemima*, that if you had the *worst* parents in the world, you would find excuses for them!

Miss CLEVELAND.

I would endeavour to do so, *Clarissa*; for I entertain the highest idea of *filial duty*, and cannot conceive what pleasure there can be in discovering a parent's faults. To me it appears a great crime to scrutinize their characters, unless with a view of discovering their virtues, in order to copy them. All human beings are liable to error, and why should we expect our parents in particular to be exempt from them? For my part, I am firmly of opinion, that no children can delight in pointing out defects in a father or mother's conduct, who are not conscious of improprieties in their own, which they hope to excuse to the world, by throwing the blame on their parents. Pardon me, *Clarissa*; but if you were a little older I should really suspect from the complaints

you

you have exhibited against your's, that you were going to throw off their authority by a *clandestine marriage*.

Miss CLARISSA, [*with great confusion.*]

What do you mean, *Jemima*? Is it possible you can have heard? —

Miss CLEVELAND.

I will not keep you in painful suspense, *Clarissa*. I am informed, that you have such a scheme in agitation as I hinted at. But surely my intelligence, which came from one of the inferior servants, is without foundation. However it is, make me your confident in the affair. Fear no reproaches, but assure yourself, of every assistance which a friend and sister can give towards extricating you from so perplexing a situation.

Miss CLARISSA.

You are very good, *Jemima*; but how shall I tell you of my indiscretion? Yet I must hasten to do so, lest my father should return, from whom I hope it will ever be concealed.

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

As far as is consistent with my duty to him, assure yourself it shall be by me—proceed therefore, my dear.

Miss CLARISSA.

You can scarcely figure to yourself a more distracted place than this house was when we came home to pass the last holidays. Whenever it was possible for mamma to bear the fatigue of dressing she went out, but seldom took us with her, because my papa objected to the expence attending our being introduced into the world; and not only to that, but really seemed to grudge money for house-keeping. This produced dreadful altercations between them. Papa would sometimes be in such violent passions that you would have been frightened to see him, and generally left the house for the whole day afterwards; and then mamma would sit and fret to such a degree, that there was no such thing as being comfortable with her. You shed tears, *Jemima!* what is the matter with you?

Miss

MISS CLEVELAND.

O! *Clarissa*! how can you ask that question? Is filial affection extinguished in your heart? I hope not! rather let me suppose, that the indifference with which you speak of altercations that distress me even to hear of, arises from want of reflection. Depend on it, my dear, there must have been some very material cause for such a change in papa's temper, which is naturally a very good one. A cause, which, from what I just now told you of his circumstances, you can no longer be at a loss to guess. But go on with your story.

MISS CLARISSA.

O! *Jemima*! you affect me so that I can scarcely restrain my own tears: but I will try to proceed. Uneasy in our parents company, both *Emma* and I used to avoid it as much as possible. Sometimes we had whole days to ourselves; for mamma was frequently too ill to leave her room, and papa from home. Not knowing how to amuse ourselves, and wanting to vent our uneasiness, we made a confidant of *Carter*, my mamma's woman, who aggravated every thing that appeared to us a fault either in

papa or mamma's conduct ; and we were persuaded to think ourselves worse treated than ever children were before.

Miss EMMA.

If we were to tell you half what *Carter* said, you would not be so ready to blame us, *Jemima*.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I am not forward to censure you, my dear sisters, but surely affection and friendship require that I should not flatter you. I suppose, *Clarissa*, this base woman had some private ends of her own to answer, which induced her to act this cruel part.

Miss CLARISSA.

She had ; and what I am going to tell you will unfold them to you. I will therefore proceed to inform you, that she employed every artifice to insinuate herself into our good opinions, and persuaded us to come into her room, when she had company, which was always the case when mamma was out ; and I assure you, that they had cards, and sometimes dancing too, and every thing in style : nay, even the inferior servants had their parties. Among Mrs. *Carter's* visitors was a young man of very smart appearance,

pearance, who she assured me, was really a young gentleman, who had, like us, bad parents. He paid particular attention to me; and at his second visit, professed himself my lover, and Mrs. Carter informed me, that he was most desperately enamoured with me.

Miss CLEVELAND.

And were you credulous enough to believe her? O! *Clarissa!* hasten to tell me the event of this blamable weakness.

Miss CLARISSA.

My *lover*, as *Carter* called him, repeated his visits; and I confess to you, my dear sister, so far succeeded in his design, that I suffered him to talk of an elopement with him to *Scotland*, and fear I should, if he had persisted, have consented to it these holidays, had I found things in the same situation in which I left them. But by bribing *Betty*, he prevailed on her to convey this letter to me at school, which she soon found means to do. I blush to give it you, but it is necessary to lay the whole of this affair before you. [*She gives Miss Cleveland a letter.*]

Miss CLEVELAND, [reads.]

Madam,

I will no longer deceive you, as the purpose for which I professed myself your lover is destroyed by your mother's going abroad, and taking my relation, Mrs. Carter, with her, who, I find, has since left her. To be a partaker of the festivity at your house, was my original motive for coming thither; and the attention I paid to you, was with a view of preventing your betraying our secrets. If you are bent on a trip to Scotland you must choose another companion; for I have no money to spare for such expeditions, nor any inclination to involve myself in difficulties by marrying a fine lady. I therefore take my leave of you, and am, Madam,

Your humble servant.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I am shocked, *Clarissa*, to an inexpressible degree! Is not your delicacy wounded to the quick, by such an indignity as this?

Miss CLARISSA, [after a flood of tears.]

O! *Jemima*! I can scarcely look you in the face!

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

For my part, *Clarissa*, I am more inclined to pity than to blame you. But can we persuade the world to entertain the same sentiments of your conduct?

Miss EMMA.

Let us hope that the story will not transpire; and if it even does, surely allowance will be made for my sister's youth and inexperience.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Form no such expectations, my dear *Emma*! Men of such character as the author of that letter, are too vain of their conquests to conceal them; and though perhaps the fear of papa's resentment may prevent his doing it publicly; depend on it, he has his confidants to whom he boasts of his success, and laughs at my sister's credulity.

Miss CLARISSA.

Spare me! for pity's sake, dear *Jemima*! I shall die with shame else!

Miss CLEVELAND.

I will spare you *Clarissa*! But indeed I never felt more angry in my life. I am hurt for the honor

of the *family*. I am hurt for that of my *sex*. Let it be your study henceforth to retrieve the injury you have done to *both*.

Miss CLARISSA.

Believe me, I will!

Miss EMMA.

Dear *Jemima*! if *Clarissa* had been guilty of the greatest indiscretion in life, you could not say more about it than you do.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I am sorry to find, my dear *Emma*, that at your early years, your mind should be insensible to that grief which every sister should feel, when so near a relation deviates from the paths of rectitude. *Clarissa* has fortunately escaped the most dreadful consequences which might have ensued; but if you are inclined to *justify her errors*, you will perhaps be led to *imitate her example*, and may not be so happy as to come off with *impunity*..

Miss CLARISSA.

I hope she will not be so foolish: neither can I be said to escape with *impunity*, *Jemima*. The conviction of my own mind, added to your censure, is
a very

a very severe punishment, I assure you: and then the *world!* I shall be afraid to go to any public place, lest I should see this man; and shall dread to enter into company, lest any one I meet there, should have heard of my indiscretion. And if the conversation should, at any time, turn upon the *imprudence of young girls*, I am sure my *confusion* will betray me.

MISS CLEVELAND.

Since your conscience is so fully awakened to the impropriety of your conduct, my dear, I will forbear all farther reproaches. But for the sake of *Emma*, who seems to think me severe in my censures, I cannot forbear adding, that the indiscretions, and too frequent levities in the young women of these days, arise from the want of prescribing to themselves certain rules of decorum, which nothing should tempt them to depart from. Thanks to my dear aunt's care, those principles are, I hope, so firmly rooted in my own mind, that I would on no consideration, violate them.

MISS CLARISSA.

Unfortunately for me, I have been taught no rules of decorum, any farther than the common forms
of

of politeness extend; if there are any that I can yet practice, teach them to me, my dear sister, I entreat you; surely, though I have, for want of a kind hand to guide me, wandered out of the right road, I have not deviated so far but I may return to it again.

Miss CLEVELAND.

By no means, my dear, and gladly will I afford you all the direction in my power. Favour me therefore with attention whilst I repeat to you some of those instructions which have been useful to me in the regulation of my conduct.

Miss CLARISSA.

Most willingly, *Jemima!*

Miss CLEVELAND.

You know, my dear, that immediately on my leaving school, I went to live with my aunt; I was then fifteen years old; and I well remember, that the first time we were alone together, she addressed me in this manner: I promise myself great pleasure, dear *Jemima*, in having you for a companion, and mean to introduce you as such wherever I go; but as my acquaintance is large, I wish before I do

so, to give you a few cautions which may preserve you from many improprieties, that you might otherwise, through inadvertency, fall into. In the first place, said she, have a nice regard to your *reputation*, and with this view guard against all levity of conduct: avoid familiarity with servants; for let them be ever so faithful or just, few of them are competent judges of what delicacy and decorum require of young ladies. Be careful how you form *confidential* friendships with persons of your own sex and age; but be still more circumspect in regard to young gentlemen; encourage no freedoms under the idea of *romping*; neither lend a willing ear to *compliment*, which is in general, but another name for *flattery*. Resolve to carry on no *clandestine correspondence*; and, in order to defend your heart against forming an improper attachment, fill up those hours which you devote to reading, not with *novels*, but in the perusal of such books as will improve your mind.

Miss

Miss EMMA.

I was just going to say, *Femina*, that I was certain from your conversation, you were no novel reader: they teach other things, I assure you.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I am not wholly a stranger to novels, my dear; I have read some, but they were of my aunt's selecting.

Miss EMMA.

I believe that I have read all that ever were published in the *English* language, and many *French* ones besides. *Carter* subscribed for us, and supplied us well, I assure you.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Then I hope you have had enough of them, and will the more readily lay them aside for books of another kind, which I shall take the liberty of recommending to you.

Miss CLARISSA.

I am sensible of the pernicious tendency of many novels, and cannot help imputing the success of *Carter's* schemes, in some measure, to the examples which are there exhibited.

Miss

Miss EMMA.

O! she was an artful creature! How, my dear *Jemima*, could *Clarissa*, circumstanced as she was, avoid the artful snare which was laid for her.

Miss CLEVELAND.

It was not my intention, my dear, to say any thing farther on the subject; and I fear, *Clarissa* will think I mean to draw an invidious comparison, if I answer your question.

Miss CLARISSA.

By no means, *Jemima*, the friend and the sister shine forth in every word you say; declare your full sentiments on the subject.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Thus called upon, my dear, I will inform you what I think I should have done, at least what I ought to have done: I should have endeavoured to bear with my mother's fretfulness, and to avoid increasing my father's anger, by any irritating expressions, or improper behaviour. If these endeavours had been unsuccessful, I do not say that I could have supported the disappointment with indifference; but I would have lamented it in silence.

You

Your making a confidant of Mrs. *Carter*, encouraged her to attempt what I dare say she would not have thought of, if you had kept her at a proper distance.

MISS EMMA.

That was undoubtedly a wrong step, and I must confess, that instead of paying such attention to our parents as you recommend, *Jemima*, we used to make sharp answers; and when we were dismissed with resentment, which we had provoked, would go into *Carter's* room, and talk over our grievances, till, with the aid of her animadversions, we fancied our parents the worst enemies we had in the world.

MISS CLARISSA.

It is very true, but I am now convinced they certainly are, as *Jemima* hinted, our greatest benefactors; for allowing them to have been remiss in some particulars, who, besides, would have conferred such benefits upon us as they have done? Were such a poor credulous girl as I to be abandoned by my parents, what might be my lot? I lately foolishly wished to forsake their house; to throw
myself

myself into the power of a stranger, with an idea of being my own mistress; but I am resolved to follow, in future, your plan, my dear sister, as far as I have opportunity of doing, and hope to repair my fault to my father, by dutiful obedience for the remainder of my life. What would I give, could I do the same by my mother! O! my dear *Jemima*! if she *dies*, I shall feel *remorse* as long as I live, for the uneasiness which, I fear I gave her when she was ill able to bear it.

Miss CLEVELAND.

If such are your regrets, my dear, for smaller offences, what would have been your feelings had you married without the consent of your parents?

Miss CLARISSA.

What, indeed! But I never considered the matter before. I thought I could plead their *example* as an excuse, and concluded, that they could do no less than forgive me on that account.

Miss EMMA.

I do not believe, *Clarissa*, that if you had married Mrs. Carter's relation, papa would ever have owned

VOL. II.

O

him

him for a son-in-law ; all our relations would have contemned such a mean alliance.

MISS CLEVELAND.

And with *justice*, my dear ; for in marriages regard should be had to *equality of rank* for many reasons. But let us chuse *another subject*. I should really be ashamed were any body to overhear such young persons as us conversing *on this*. Before we think of *marrying* let us endeavour to acquit ourselves well in our present relations of life. Let us, my dears, strive to fulfil the duties of *daughters* and *sisters*. Let us learn the rules of *economy* and *good housewifry*. Perfect ourselves in the virtues of *submission*, *meekness*, and *patience* ; and adorn our minds with every branch of *useful knowledge*, before we venture to form important connections, in which, if we are not possessed of those qualifications, and do not practice those virtues, we shall certainly be unhappy, and the cause of unhappiness to others. But the interesting conversation we have been engaged in, has made us forget the dear children. You promised to go up to them again, *Clarissa* and *Emma*.

MISS

Miss EMMA.

Very true; let us go up. Will you accompany us, *Jemima*?

Miss CLEVELAND.

Most willingly! I am their governess now; but hope that both you and *Clarissa* will lend me your assistance, as well as in the management of the house.

Miss CLARISSA.

Surely you jest with us, *Jemima*! and only mean to make us feel our own deficiencies?

Miss CLEVELAND.

Can you suspect me of so *ungenerous* a design? No, my dear sisters, I wish on the contrary to call into action those abilities which I know you possess; and give you opportunities of testifying your gratitude and affection to our good father, who will, I am confident, reward your endeavours to please him, with such a degree of paternal love as you have never yet experienced. Had you seen with what tenderness he pressed me to his heart this morning, you would have wished to be a sharer of my happiness.

Miss CEARISSA.

You have inspired me with the most fervent desire to obtain the good opinion of my father. Perhaps I should have been even now in full possession of it, had I been careful to deserve it. Let us hasten to the dear girls, that we may be ready to receive him when he returns from his walk.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I will, with pleasure, attend you. [*They go out.*]

END of ACT II.

A C T III.

[Enter Mr. Cleveland, with Master Edward and Master Henry, returning from their walk.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

HOW do you find yourselves, my dear boys,
after your walk?

Master EDWARD.

I am very well, thank you, papa; but so hungry,
that, with your leave, I will go and get something
to eat. I must see *Clarissa* and *Emma* first though.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Do so, and desire them to come down to me. How
is *your* stomach affected *Henry*? Has jumping pro-
cured you an appetite also?

Master HENRY.

Indeed it has, fir.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Then go and satisfy it by all means. I suppose you will kiss your sisters first?

Master HENRY.

Certainly, papa. I would go even without my dinner to do that. [*Master Edward and Henry go out.*]

Mr. CLEVELAND.

What charming boys! I have had inexpressible pleasure this morning! their cheerfulness has enlivened me. I feel my spirits refreshed, and have a presentiment that my affairs will come round, and I shall be happy with my family. Here come my girls.

[*Enter Miss Clarissa and Miss Emma.*]

[*Mr. Cleveland meets them, and taking first one, then the other in his arms, kisses them affectionately; they appear confused.*]

Mr. CLEVELAND, [*surprised.*]

What is the matter, my dear girls! Why do you not return the affection of your father?

Miss

Miss CLARISSA.

That I most sincerely do ; but the remembrance of my ill behaviour to you and mamma last holidays, tells me I am unworthy of your tenderness ; and I am confounded in your presence. Pardon me, I entreat you, and give me your blessing !

Miss EMMA, [*sobbing.*]

And me too ! Dear papa, forgive me too !

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Come to my arms, my dear girls ! Most cordially do I forgive every thing that is past. Receive my warmest benediction. May the choicest blessings of heaven be your lot ! And may I be the dispenser of them as far as paternal love can extend !

Miss CLARISSA.

I am resolved, dear papa, to copy *Jemima* in every thing I can ; and then I doubt not but I shall be able to contribute to your happiness.

Miss EMMA, [*having suppressed her tears.*]

It shall be my endeavour to do the same, and to avoid such provocation as I gave you last holidays.

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Let us talk no more of the last holidays, my dear girls; the recollection of them is painful to me, upon many accounts. Instead of reverting to so disagreeable a subject, let us form some plan for the enjoyment of the present vacation, to me as welcome as to you, believe me.

Miss CLARISSA.

Jemima has a scheme to propose, sir, which we are all impatient to obtain your approbation of.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Has she? then I am sure it is a *good* one; call her to me, my love.

Miss CLARISSA.

I will, sir. *Emma*, you promised to return to *Catherine* and *Sophia*, as soon as you had paid your duty to papa. I make no doubt, but he will permit you to retire.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

By all means, my dear. I do not wish to detain you from any innocent amusement. You will fetch *Jemima*, *Clarissa*?

Miss

Miss CLARISSA.

I will, sir.

[*The young ladies go out.*]

Mr. CLEVELAND.

I am all amazement at the scene that has passed, though I endeavoured to conceal it. What can have effected this surprising change in girls whom I regarded as unmanageably turbulent. In the last holidays, there was no bearing their pertness; they had a retort for every thing which either their mamma or I said to them. O! *Jemima!* this is your work! Your sweetness is capable of changing even a savage nature!

[*Enter Miss Cleveland, bringing the baby in her arms.*]

Miss CLEVELAND.

My sisters informed me, sir, that you required me to attend you. I was just coming to present this little stranger to you. Go to papa, *Frances*.

[*Mr. Cleveland takes the child in his arms, and kisses her; but not knowing him, she cries, on which he gives her back again to Miss Cleveland.*]

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Here! take your lovely charge, *Jemima*! I hope the day will soon come, when she can behold her father without terror.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I will, sir.

[*She goes out.*]

Mr. CLEVELAND.

I dismissed *Jemina*, because I would not distress her by reproaches of her mother, which, with pain, I suppressed as they rose to my lips. Had she kept my infants at home, they would have returned my endearments. But let me ask my own heart, have I nothing to condemn myself for—alas! yes! I fear I have been as much to blame as my wife. O! that she could recover, and partake my present happiness!

[*Enter Miss Cleveland.*]

Mr. CLEVELAND.

You are soon returned, *Jemima*.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I wish to execute my dear father's orders as soon as possible on every occasion. You commanded me to attend you.

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

I did so, my love. *Clarissa* tells me you have a scheme to propose for the enjoyment of the present holidays?

Miss CLEVELAND.

Not for the present holidays only, sir, but for a continuance, if it merits your approbation.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Name it, my dear; that it is *your's* will be a sufficient recommendation of it to me.

Miss CLEVELAND.

O! my dear sir! how does your kind condescension encourage me! My scheme then is this: to leave the town-house entirely; to discharge the present set of servants, who are extravagant, wasteful, and dissolute beyond description; and to retire into the country.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

You astonish me, *Jemima*! Notwithstanding the high opinion I entertain of your good-sense, I could not have expected such a proposal from a girl of eighteen. What! resign all the amusements of the gay world, to which your youth entitles you, to immure

mure yourself in a country village an hundred miles from the metropolis, where there are not above half a dozen families with whom you can expect any society?

Miss CLEVELAND.

I have considered all this, sir, and have no doubt, but we shall be very comfortable in the country. We are a little society of ourselves, and shall contrive a hundred modes of diversion for our leisure hours. Besides, I have, from my good aunt, had a very agreeable account of the neighbouring gentry, whose company will afford us a pleasing variety. My only fear is, that we shall not be able to entertain you, sir. But you can come to town when you please, we will take the same care at home during your absence, as if your eye was upon us.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

But that I am certain, from the goodness of your heart, *Jemima*, that you did not mean it as such; I should take what you said last as a reproof to me. I hope, my love, I shall, for the future, find my amusements in my own family. Believe me, when I assure you, that I have been more truly diverted
with

with my two boys this morning than I could have been at any public place whatever.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I have reason to think, sir, that every one of your children will contribute to your amusement there is a general emulation amongst us to do so.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

To you I attribute it, my dear girl: you are the kind inspirer of it. Assure yourself of my ready concurrence with all your plans. But how, at such a distance from *London* are the younger children to be instructed? they have not yet, as I may say, received any education.

Miss CLEVELAND.

The education which you had the goodness to bestow upon me, and my elder sisters, has enabled us to instruct the younger ones in many things. *Clarissa* and *Emma* have agreed to assist me, and the rest have promised a ready attention; happy in the thoughts of being brought up at home, instead of going to school!

Mr. CLEVELAND.

This plan, my dear, may do very well for a little while; but *Edward* and *Henry* must go on with the Classics, and there you cannot teach them [*after a pause.*] But surely I can instruct them myself: for the present, I will do so, and when we are settled, get a private tutor for them: I will write this day to Mrs. *Atkinson*, the curate's wife, and entreat the favour of her to hire a set of servants; and honest *Mary*, the gardener's wife, who at present takes care of the house, can, by the direction of Mrs. *Atkinson*, get it in order for us. I will let her live in a little lodge which was originally built for the gardener's residence. What furniture is wanted for mine may be sent from hence; and we will soon bid adieu to this racketing town, in which I have found but little real enjoyment.

[*A Footman enters.*]

FOOTMAN.

A gentleman, sir, who says he came from *France*, begs the favour of seeing you.

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Shew him into my study, I will wait on him immediately, [*Footman goes out.*] A gentleman from France! Perhaps my wife is dead! Forbid it Heaven!

[*He goes out hastily.*]

Miss CLEVELAND.

I tremble with apprehension! I hope my dear mother's life will be spared, that she may enjoy more happiness than she has done for many years.

[*Enter Miss Clarissa and Miss Emma.*]

Miss CLARISSA.

Do you know who that *French* gentleman is, sister, who is now in the study with papa? I met John in the hall, who told me, that he believed he came from mamma.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I can give you no intelligence, my dear, but am in a state of most painful suspense, till I am informed of his business.

Miss EMMA.

Have you communicated your scheme to papa, *Jemima*?

Miss CLEVELAND.

I have, my dear, and he readily agrees to our putting it in execution. You and *Clarissa* are to leave school, and the little ones to be educated at home, as we proposed.

Miss CLARISSA.

I am glad of it with all my heart. By retiring into the country, I shall, I hope, escape the mortification of having my indiscretion made public; and flatter myself I shall establish a good reputation in the neighbourhood I am going to.

Miss EMMA.

By assisting you in the instruction of the children, *Jemima*, we shall be likely to keep up our *French*, *Geography*, *Embroidery*, and other things, which we have learnt at school. Then I am delighted with the idea of the dances you have promised us, and the hopes, that amongst our neighbours we may find some agreeable companions.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I dare say we shall; and I suppose we can have masters to give us farther instruction; for there is a capital ladies school within two miles of our house.

Miss

Miss CLARISSA.

Are you coming up to the children, *Jemima*? *Catherine* and *Sophia*, seem quite tired of working. I was desired to ask you, how you wish them to be employed?

Miss CLEVELAND.

It was my intention that they should take a little walk in the Park till dinner-time; but I cannot conveniently attend them, as I am in hopes my father will return and relieve my mind from its present anxiety. Will you, *Emma*, have the goodness to accompany them?

Miss EMMA.

Upon condition that you will send for me as soon as you know what news the *French* gentleman has brought of mamma. Shall *Edward* and *Henry* go with me?

Miss CLEVELAND.

With all my heart, if they are not already tired with walking; but if they are so, or have fixed upon some other amusement, you had best not interrupt them. I have promised them a holiday.

Miss CLARISSA.

Suppose, *Emma*, that nurse carries *Frances* with you? The dear little creature seems to know me already, *Jemima*! I hope she will be fond of me: you cannot think how diverted she has been with some of *Emma*'s droll tricks.

Miss EMMA.

I can play no more of them, till I know what news this *Frenchman* brings. I will go to her, however.

[*She goes out.*]

Miss CLEVELAND.

My father's conference with this foreigner is a very long one, at least it appears so to me, through my impatience to know how my mother does.

[*Enter Mr. Cleveland in great agitation, with a letter in his hand; he throws himself into a chair, both the young ladies hasten to him. Miss Cleveland takes his hand, and after some hesitation speaks.*]

Miss CLEVELAND.

It is needless to ask you the contents of that letter, sir! I have no longer a mother.

[*She sinks down almost fainting.*]

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Femima! my dear *Femima!* your fears are groundless! Your mother is much better. The emotion you observed in me, proceeded not from *sorrow*, but *excess of joy*. I must make you, my dear girls, my *confidants* on this occasion. Your prudence will teach you not to repeat our conversation to the younger children. Read this letter, *Femima*, and read it *aloud*; it has thrown my spirits into such a tumult of joy, that I have only a confused remembrance of its contents.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Indeed, my dear sir, I am not equal to the task of reading it *aloud*.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Then give it me again, my love. I am more composed now. [He reads.

I have the pleasure to inform you, my dear, that I already find great benefit from the salubrious air of this mild climate. The fever has left me; my cough is almost gone; my appetite restored; and the physician flatters me, that in another month, I may be in a condition to return to my native country. I cannot doubt but that humanity
will

will incline you to rejoice at the prospect of my recovery: happy should I be, could you do so from a higher motive! That my children also could delight in the restoration of a mother! but, alas! I fear the life of dissipation which I have led for many years, careless of domestic duties, has eradicated your affection for me, and prevented the growth of theirs. Permit me, however, to assure you, that my illness has awakened those reflections, which, till lately, I have not allowed myself time to indulge; and my resolution is formed to begin a new course of life, and to seek for happiness in my own family. I could wish at my return to England, to retire to B—; as I fear a town life will overset my constitution again; and country air will be necessary to complete my recovery. It would be a great pleasure to me to have my family with me; and I hope to be indulged with the little ones at least. I beg that Frances may be taken from nurse. Remember me with affection to all the children, who are dearer to me than ever; and believe me, &c.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Now you have heard the letter, *Jemima*, can you wonder at my emotion?

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

Indeed, sir, I cannot. My mother's happy recovery, and her desire for *retirement*, are so agreeable to our wishes, that I am delighted beyond expression!

Mr. CLEVELAND.

It is impossible to describe to you the present sensations of my heart. I know, I feel, that I shall be happy with my family. If I do not mistake my own disposition, *nature* has formed me for a *domestic character*; for though *fashion* and *folly* have tempted me to diviate from her paths, I have secretly *despised* the very amusements I have appeared to promote; and could I but have had a *happy home*, should long ago have forsaken them. Not that I mean at this time to reflect on your mother. I have been at least as blameable as she. A *steady resolution*, enforced with *good humour* on my part, would, I dare say, have had its due influence on her.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Spare us the pain, dear sir, of being witnesses to your *self-reproaches*. Permit us to retire; when you are more composed we will wait on you again.

Mr.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

No, my love, stay. There has been one material error in my conduct, which I am desirous of pointing out to you as a *warning*; for though I hope you are not in immediate danger, no one knows what temptations may fall in your way. The fault I allude to, was an *inconsiderate precipitate marriage without the consent of parents*. That my *example* may not be an encouragement to any of you to be guilty of the same fault, let me tell you now, as I shall your *brothers* and *sisters* at a proper age, that I regard it as the source of all the unhappiness of my life.

Miss CLEVELAND,

Affure yourself, dear sir, I never will entertain a thought of marriage without your entire approbation; and I dare say, I may answer for *Clarissa*.

[*Miss Clarissa appears confused, but strives to conceal it.*]

Mr. CLEVELAND.

I do not say this, *Clarissa*, because I have the least distrust, either of you or *Jemima*; my only design is by my *advice* to furnish you with an *antidote* against the *contagion of my example*. I would not wish that any child of mine should feel the same kind of pangs which

which I have felt, and therefore must tell you the *first consequences* of this rash step; the *succeeding ones* you have, without doubt, *yourselves* observed.

MISS CLEVELAND.

You are very good, sir! but indeed this subject is too painful to me. I have ever accustomed myself to look up to you with *reverence, gratitude,* and *love*. I cannot bear a word that has the remotest tendency to shew you in *another light*: no, not even from *your own lips*.

MR. CLEVELAND.

Amiable creature! Hear me this once, *Jemima*! My heart is so full I must relieve it. I cannot be satisfied if I do not. It is certainly my duty.

MISS CLEVELAND.

Well, sir, if it must be so, I obey.

MR. CLEVELAND.

I was, my dear, the second son of my father, who possessed, as you know, a considerable estate; but as I had an elder brother and four sisters, my expectations of fortune were moderate, and my father intended me for the bar. With a view to my advancement in life, he placed me with an eminent barrister.

barriker. This gentleman had two daughters, the eldest (your good aunt *Jemima*) having lost her mother, lived with a relation; but the youngest was kept as a parlour boarder at one of the first schools in *England*; she, however, came home occasionally, and at those recesses I became acquainted with her, and the consequence of our acquaintance was an elopement to *Scotland*. This journey quite exhausted my finances; and being entirely at a loss how to provide for our future subsistence, we were under the necessity of throwing ourselves at the feet of our parents.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Pardon the interruption, sir; but what must have been the distress both of you and mamma, when you came into the presence of your parents, after taking so important a step, without their knowledge and consent?

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Greater than you can imagine, my dear. Their just reproaches were like daggers to our hearts. My wife's father, being a man of the nicest honor, was at first inexorable, for he feared the world would suspect

suspect him of being privy to the match ; and mine treated me with a coolness which the consciousness of having deserved it rendered doubly afflicting ; however, he kindly continued the sum he had allotted for my annual allowance, with some addition ; and then my father-in-law was induced to give my wife a small portion. We took a little house in town ; and had we understood domestic œconomy, might have lived very comfortably ; but instead of redoubling my assiduities at the law, I entirely neglected my studies ; and your mother having no judgment in respect to the expenditure of money, was liable to numberless impositions ; this, added to a taste for public diversions, which we foolishly substituted for domestic pleasures, involved us in a variety of difficulties. [*Miss Clarissa bursts into tears.* My dear *Clarissa*, why are you so greatly affected ?

Miss CLEVELAND.

Indeed, my good sir, my feelings are very great as well as *Clarissa's*. The idea of what our parents must have suffered is enough to awaken the tenderest emotion.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Well, my dear girls, I will hasten to a conclusion of my story. To add to our embarrassment a young family came on. I wished your mother to nurse you herself, *Jemima*; but some of her fashionable acquaintance persuaded her, that it would ruin her health, and confine her constantly at home, so she was prevailed on to put you to nurse. And thus was one of the greatest delights in life, that of *enjoying our children in their infancy*, turned out of doors; for every succeeding child was, like you, consigned to the care of a stranger; two we buried.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I doubt not, sir, but that, notwithstanding we were put to nurse, both you and my dear mother had a great deal of care and trouble, as well as expence on our account.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

We had, indeed, my dear. After we had been married seven years, my elder brother died of a fever, and I became my father's heir; he lived but
fix

fix months after his son, and, with his dying breath, urged me to leave the idle course of life I was in, and pass my time like a *christian*. I fully intended to obey him; but both your mother and I found it difficult to shake off our old companions, who enticed us on from day to day, till, having money at command, we became more dissipated than ever; fortunately, neither of us had any taste for gaming, or we might have totally ruined our family. The events of this day have recalled to my mind my father's dying injunctions, which I am resolved, though late, to fulfil.—O! my dear, my honored parent! how does my heart reproach me for ingratitude to your memory!

Miss CLARISSA.

My dear sir, you afflict yourself beyond measure!

Mr. CLEVELAND.

No, *Clarissa*, my remorse, though great, is not equal to my offences. *Obedience to parents* is one of the first of moral duties; no one can violate it without offending their *heavenly Father*, whose representatives our *earthly parents* are to us. Nay, disobedience

obedience naturally leads to the breach of other duties. Had I been a good son, and followed my father's early advice, which was to *settle my principles, establish a good character, and have a prospect of providing for a family before I thought of marrying*, I think I should have been an affectionate husband and a tender father.

Miss CLEVELAND.

I have always considered you as such, sir, and as such, will ever revere you.

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Henceforth you shall find me all a parent should be; but I lose the thread of my narration. After my father's death, my fortune was very considerable; but neither your mother or I had used ourselves to any calculations; and as our family increased, expences increased, so that for some time past, I have lived beyond it, and have been under the necessity of borrowing money on a mortgage. However, the prudent plan you have proposed, my dear *Jemima*, will I think, in a few years bring my affairs round, and I hope to live in such a manner as to give my children cause to bless me.

Miss

Miss CLARISSA.

We already do, my dear, my honored parent!

Mr. CLEVELAND.

Well, my dear girls, I will now retire to my study till dinner is ready, by which time I hope we shall all be sufficiently composed, to meet together with cheerful hearts and happy countenances.

[*He goes out.*]

Miss CLARISSA.

O! my dear *Jemima*, what distress have I endured whilst my father related the history of his past life!

Miss CLEVELAND.

I doubt not but you have. I sincerely sympathized with you. What condescension has he shewn?

[*Enter Miss Emma.*]

Miss EMMA.

How could you serve me so, *Jemima*? you promised to send for me as soon as the *Frenchman* was gone.

Miss

Miss CLEVELAND.

I did so, indeed, *Emma*; but papa detained us. I have now the pleasure of informing you, that mamma is better, and will come home in a short time; therefore, let us look forward to the happiness in store for us. Let each of us study to do every thing in our power towards establishing good order in the house we are going to, that at mamma's return she may find a *comfortable family*.

Miss CLARISSA.

For my part, *Jemima*, I am so fully convinced, that happiness depends on the proper discharge of the *domestic virtues*, that I resolve from this day to make them my study; and never will I again think of marrying, till I have qualified myself to fill the offices of *wife, mother, and mistress of a family*.

Miss CLEVELAND.

Then, my dear, you may, with great probability of success, promise yourself the attainment of the happiness you aspire to. Would every young woman form such a resolution, and abide by it, I have reason to think, there would be few *indifferent husbands and careless fathers*. However, let us make
 1 the

the experiment. If we acquit ourselves properly as *daughters* and *sisters*, we shall at least form no *improper connections*; neither shall we be in danger of *deviating* from the *paths of propriety*, while we fill up our time with *useful employments*.

T H E E N D.